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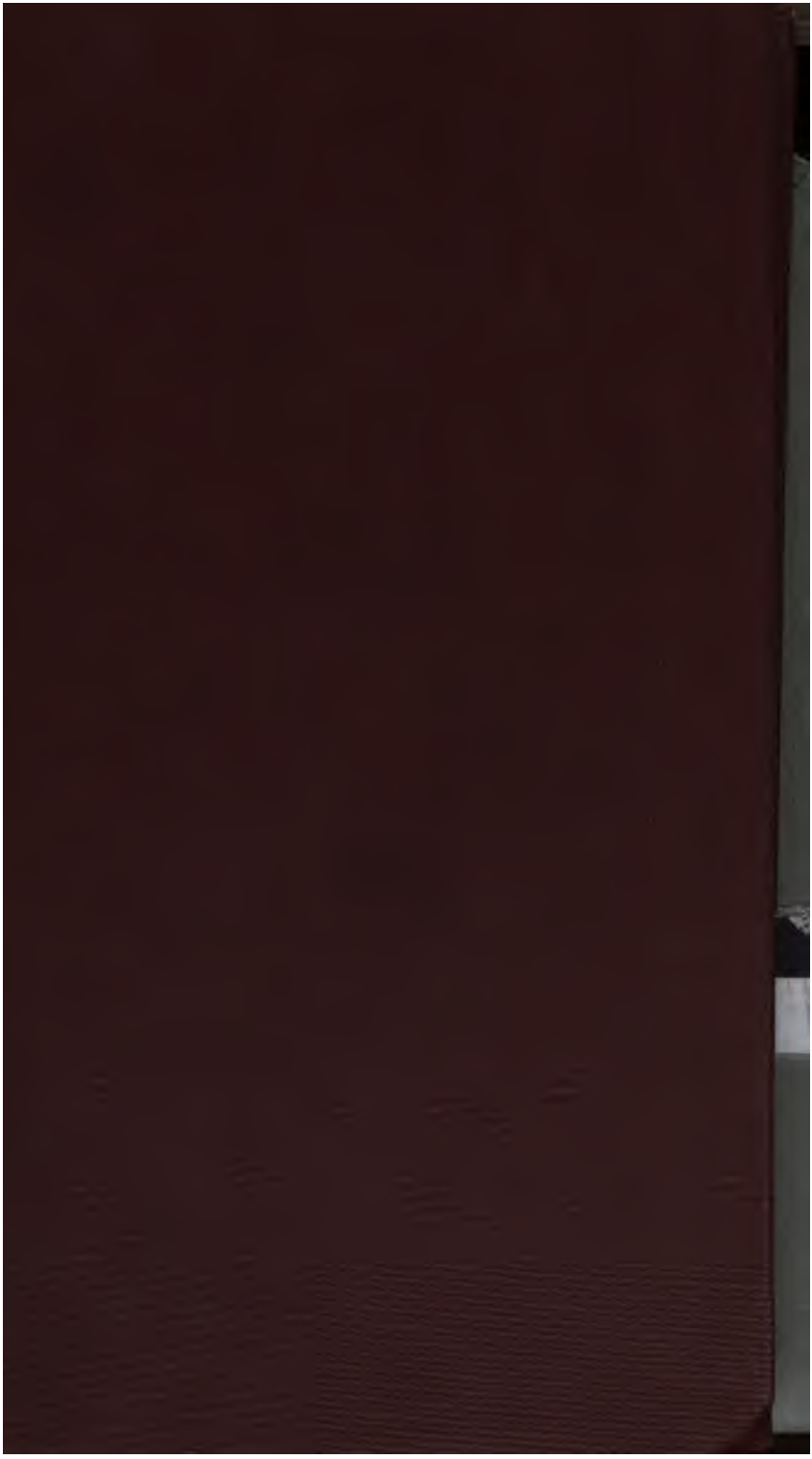

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TRADITIONS,

LEGENDS, SUPERSTITIONS, AND SKETCHES

OF

DEVONSHIRE

ON THE BORDERS OF

THE TAMAR AND THE TAVY,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF ITS

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, HISTORY,

ANTIQUITIES, SCENERY, AND NATURAL HISTORY,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO

ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

BY

MRS. BRAY.

AUTHOR (AS MRS. STOTHARD) OF 'TRAVELS IN NORMANDY,' ETC.

"I own the power
Of local sympathy, that o'er the fair
Throws more divine allurement, and o'er all
The great, more grandeur."

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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SUBJECTS

OF

VOLUME THE SECOND.

	Page
Letter XXII.	1
Letter XXIII.	34
Letter XXIV.	60
Letter XXV.	81
Letter XXVI.	100
Letter XXVII.	134
Letter XXVIII.	176
Letter XXIX.	220
Letter XXX.	248
Letter XXXI.	301

LETTERS TO THE LAUREATE,

&c. &c.

LETTER XXII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

Contents:—Tavistock, its situation and local advantages—The River, &c.—Great antiquity of the Town—For what celebrated—An old Woman's observation on the antiquity of scalded cream—Etymology of the name of the Town—Beauty of the surrounding objects—The Vicarage—Those pleasures derived from Nature most lasting—Browne, the Author of Britannia's Pastorals, born in Tavistock—His lines on his birth-place—The Nightingale not found in Devon—Little known of the Roman era in this part of the West—Tavistock intimately connected with Saxon History—A Saxon Noble founder of its Abbey—That Monastic foundation gave importance to the Town—Progress of Christianity in the West—By whom the Damnonii were converted not known with any certainty—Mr. Southey's opinion on the subject, given in a Note, from one of his letters—The People of the West benefited in civilization by the Roman Conquest—The subject continued—Anglo-Saxons settled in this part of the Island—Progress of the Church—The first Bishops in Devon—Abbey of Tavistock; its present poor remains contrasted with its former splendour—Orgar, his rank and office as Alderman or Earl of Devon—The Court in which he presided—Elected at the Shiregemot—The wisdom of Alfred in his Laws—Office of Earl not at first hereditary—A Member of the Wittenagemote—Orgar, father of the celebrated Elfrida—She was born in Tavistock—Her early Life—Ethelwold deputed to woo her for the King—Splendour of her Father's Court—Ethelwold falls in love with, deceives the King, and marries her himself—The trick discovered; its fatal consequences—Different opinions respecting the place where Ethelwold was slain—Malmesbury proved to be erroneous in his statement respecting Dorsetshire—Browne and Selden's detection of errors in the manuscript copies of Malmesbury referred to—hence might have arisen the mistake

—Risdon's account most probable; supported as it is by the evidence derived from local circumstances—Risdon's learning as an antiquary—Edward the Martyr most likely killed in Dorsetshire, where the Nunnery was afterwards built by Elfrida—Saxon Chronicle quoted in evidence of the fact—The question further examined, and the subject continued—Miss Seward's mistake respecting Gawthorpe Hall, the Seat of Lord Harewood, Yorkshire, for Harewood in Cornwall—Mason's Tragedy of Elfrida; its merit as a poem—Falsifies History.

Vicarage, Tavistock, June 16, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING now led you through the western limits of Dartmoor, whence the river Tavy takes its rise, I purpose, in this letter, commencing my account of the town to which that river gives name: a town of very high antiquity, and possessing many interesting claims on our attention, not only in a general, but individual point of view; since it has given birth to many whose names have become illustrious in the history or literature of this kingdom.

Tavistock is situated on the banks of the Tavy, on the western side of the Forest of Dartmoor, and not very far distant from the river Tamar, which divides the counties of Cornwall and Devon. It lies thirty-two miles west from the city of Exeter; sixteen south from Oakhampton; and fourteen north from the good town of Plymouth. Few places in England, perhaps, have been more blest with local attractions by the bounties of a gracious Providence.

The town lies in a valley surrounded by hills, whose verdure is perpetual. The river is here peculiarly beautiful: it runs, with great rapidity, over vast portions of rock that form its bed. The whole

parish abounds with springs and rivulets of the purest water. The woods (where they are suffered to remain, for the love of lopping a tree in every hedge is the sin of this neighbourhood) are exceedingly luxuriant: the oak is common amongst these, and the most wooded parts lie westward in the parish. The soil is, generally speaking, of a deep brown, here and there tinged with red; it is exceedingly rich and fertile; and strata of alluvial deposit may be observed in many of the valleys. Our pasturage is abundant; and we are celebrated, like most parts of Devon, for the excellence of that luxury, our *scalded* or *clouted* cream. This has been honoured by the notice of a poet whose verse captivates the fancy, and raises even to ecstasy the spirit of every reader whose heart and eye are sensible to the charms of nature in all the varied productions of her hand. Spenser thus alludes to our cream in his delightful poem, the 'Shepherd's Calendar;' where Colin recites to Thenot the graces and courtesy of a deceased Shepherdess:

> Ne would she scorne the simple shepheard swaine;
> For she would call him often heme,
> And give him curds and clouted cream.

We have another delicious preparation from our milk, called *junket*, which has also been noticed by a great poet; for Milton writes in his L'Allegro,

> 'And fairy Mab the *junkets* ate.'

Indeed we are so celebrated for our cream, and have been so in all ages, that I doubt not that of this was made the very sort of butter, in the western parts of Britain, so much esteemed by the Romans: the wicker-worked baskets, and the butter of the Britons, being alluded to by one or more of their most

famous writers*. This luxury, no doubt, continued to be held in estimation in the times of the Anglo-Saxons, when the western part of the island became more than ever valuable on account of its flocks and herds. I once told a good old woman, who carried me into her cottage to see her dairy at *Pitter* Tavy, (as the country people here call the romantic village of Peter Tavy) that she little thought of how ancient date was the custom of preparing the rich scalded cream, in the manner she was describing to me. "Auncient!" she exclaimed; "I'se warrant he's as old as Adam; for all the best things in the world were to be had in Paradise." This origin of clouted cream went even beyond my antiquarian speculations; though certainly I must admit, if all the best things in the world were really to be found in Paradise, our cream might, certainly, there claim a place.

Respecting the name of our town, I here insert an extract from my brother Alfred John Kempe's Historical Notices of the Abbey, that appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine, to which, on almost all subjects connected with antiquity, he has now, for many years, been a constant, and I will add, a valuable contributor.

"The etymology of the name Tavistock does not appear to be of difficult solution. 'The place on the Tavy' is evidently implied by the compound; but it may be observed that, by early writers of the monkish age, the Tavy is called the *Tau*, and that the *Taw*, the *Towy*, the *Tay*, and the *Taf*, are common appellatives of many British rivers. The Tavy discharges itself into the Tamar, a few miles above

* Martial mentions the baskets, Pliny the butter of the barbarians.

Plymouth; of which last-mentioned river it may be accounted a branch. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the Tavy is an abbreviation of the British words *Tau vechan,* or the little Tau, thus distinguishing the tributary branch from the *Tau mawr,* (afterwards Tamar,) the great Tau. When the Saxons established this town and monastery on the banks of the *Tau vechan,* they were content to affix a short adjunct from their own language to the original British words, and the abbreviated form, so much sought by common parlance, easily moulded *Tau vechanstoke* into Tavistock. The Saxon Chronicle indeed strongly countenances this opinion; in that venerable record it is called Æteſinzſtoke, which, without any distortion, may be read At-tavingstoke*."

I confess, that in describing my beloved town, I shall find some difficulty in speaking with other than the most partial feelings; since so much cause have I to give it a good name, so much do I delight in the scenery that every where surrounds us; so much pleasure do I feel in the tranquil retirement

* Respecting the etymology of Tavistock, I copy the following passage from the works of Browne, the poet, who was born in that town. "Tavie is a river, having his head in Dertmoor, in Devon, some few miles from Marie-Tavy, and falls southward into Tamar: out of the same Moore riseth, running northward, another, called *Tau*: which by the way the rather I speak of, because in the printed Malmesburie de Gest. Pontific. lib. 2, fol. 146, you reade: Est in Damnonia cœnobium Monachorum juxta Tau fluvium, quod Tavistock vocatur: whereas upon Tau stands (neere the north side of the shire) Taustocke, being no remnants of a monasterie; so that you must there reade, juxta *Tair* Fluvium, as in a *Manuscript* Copie of Malmesburie's time (the form of the hand assuring Malmesburie's time) belonging to the Abbey of St. Augustine, in Canterburie, I have seen in the hands of my very learned friend M. Selden." Indeed Taustock and Tavistock are still very frequently confounded.

of the Vicarage house, (situated as it is in a beautiful garden, where the venerable walls of the Abbey form the boundary of our little domain,) that I fancy no spot so delightful as my own home. Many, I dare say, would smile at hearing such an assertion; but if it be a prejudice, it is not only a very harmless one, but such as may be encouraged and turned to good account; a grateful contentment with that lot given to us as our portion by the goodness of Providence, being one of those duties that carry with them their reward—a constant enjoyment of the things that are our own. Here, indeed, may we say, "the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places." And if it be true, (which surely no considerate mind will deny,) that next to the blessing of dear kindred and friends, there are no temporal blessings to be compared to a quiet home, situated in a picturesque country, with plenty of books and leisure to read them, we have every cause to feel that we are blest; and to entertain that kindly spirit even towards the inanimate things of this neighbourhood, which can only be truly felt where there is content at home to receive it. A mind distracted with worldly cares and desires, the gratification of which arises from without, and is dependent on the will of others, on casualty or caprice, can never be sufficiently disengaged to admit that fellowship of feeling which associates its own tranquillity with the beauty and harmony of nature. There must be rest in the soul to enjoy it in the fields; and there it will be found, like that peace of mind which passeth all understanding, that the world can neither give nor take away, a constant source of the most enduring pleasures.

Browne, the poet, was fully alive to this feeling,

when he celebrated, in the numbers of pure English verse, the pastoral delights of his "native Tavy," as he calls the river that watered the town where he first drew breath. The associations created by poetry never die: they are like the immortal spirit to whose aspirations they owe their birth, above the things of this life, and are neither liable to the chances nor changes of fortune. To live in a neighbourhood that has given birth to a poet, that has seen him in his infancy sporting amidst its hills and valleys, and receiving by its "voiceful streams" those early impressions which, in after and maturer years, become the theme of his song, is a circumstance, in itself, enough to inspire even a common mind with some of those better feelings that have no part with the world, or the world's law. On this account, had Tavistock no other claim to veneration—as the birthplace of Browne, the author of Britannia's Pastorals, it would stand eminent amongst towns. With what feelings its picturesque situation inspired the youthful poet, even these simple lines (which more by chance than design have just met my eye, in turning over the pages of his works) may serve to tell.

As (woo'd by Maye's delights) I have been borne
To take the kind ayre of a wistfull morne
Neere Tavie's voyceful streame (to whom I owe
More straines than from my pipe can ever flowe;)
Here have I heard a sweet bird never lin
To chide the river for his clam'rous din;
There seem'd another in his song to tell,
That what the fayre streame did he liked well;
And going further heard another too
All varying still in what the others doe;
A little thence, a fourth with little paine
Con'd all their lessons and then sung againe;

So numberlesse the songsters are that sing
In the sweet groves of the too careless spring,
That I no sooner could the hearing lose
Of one of them, but straight another rose
And perching deftly on a quaking spray
Nye tired herself to make her hearer stay,
Whilst in a bush two nightingales together
Show'd the best skill they had to draw me thither.

Browne's allusion to the nightingale, in these lines, must either have been a poetical license, or some change must have taken place in the natural history of Devon since his day; as that bird is now unknown in our county. White attributes the failure of it, with us, not to want of warmth, as the west is the mildest part of the whole island; but considers it a presumptive argument that this bird crosses over from the continent at the narrowest passage, and strolls not so far westward. Some naturalists, however, conclude that we are wanting in the peculiar kind of food on which the nightingale delights to feed.

I shall not enter here upon any individual local descriptions; because, as in the letters about Dartmoor, it will, I think, be more amusing to blend all such accounts with the historical and antiquarian notices, as they may occur. Thus, for instance, when I shall have occasion to speak of the great Sir Francis Drake, it will be time enough to mention the beautiful spot in which he was born about a mile from our town. Something must previously be said of the early history of this place; and the British period having already occupied many letters in relation to the moor, the Saxon comes next in succession; as very little is known of the Roman era in this part of England.

Indeed Tavistock is so intimately connected with the Anglo-Saxon times, that many persons, perhaps, would have commenced at that period; since not only to a Saxon noble was the town indebted for its costly abbey, but here, also, was that language studied and taught after it had become obsolete in every other part of the kingdom. Here, too, the daughter of the founder of that abbey, the unworthy wife of Ethelwold, the queen of Edgar, the cruel step-mother of his son—the beautiful Elfrida, first drew breath; and here was acted the scene of that interview, which awakened in the heart of the young king a guilty passion that prompted him to commit the crimes of treachery and murder.

The foundation of the Abbey of Tavistock was a thing of so much importance, not only to the town, but in the ecclesiastical history of the county, that it becomes necessary here to offer a few brief remarks on the progress of Christianity in the west, which inspired the kings of Wessex and the earls of Devon with that piety and zeal for the church, so beneficial in its day, and so productive of good, before those corruptions gradually crept in which rendered the reformation absolutely necessary to restore the ceremonies, as well as the doctrines of our religion, to their primitive purity and spirit.

At what period Christianity was first propagated in Damnonia, or by whom, is not, I believe, known with any degree of certainty: but, from the circumstance of the ancient Britons making Cornwall one of the strong-holds of their retreat, it is probable, as the remnant of the bards and Druids still lingered with that people, that paganism might have maintained its sway in the west, when it was no longer

to be found in the mid-land, or other parts of Britain *.

It seems doubtful if Christianity was here propagated previous to the Saxon conquest; though it is highly probable the natives of Devon benefited in civilization after the Roman power was established in these kingdoms. The Romans were stern foes, but generous conquerors; and the nations they subdued were not left by them, as by the barbarous hordes of the north in their achievements, with no other mark than that of destruction to witness their victories. The useful and even the elegant arts of life came with them: the very ensign they bore—the eagle—a noble and a royal bird, as truly denoted the high character of their conquests, as did the banner of the raven, that dark bird of prey, prefigure the destructive victories of the cruel Danes.

Though the Damnonii cannot be supposed to have acquired that degree of civilization which would have rendered them equal to their Roman victors in the general refinement of their manners, yet the discountenance, and, as far as it could be effected, the extirpation of the rites of Druidism, answered a good

* A few days after the above passage was written, a letter I had the honour of receiving from Mr. Southey confirmed the opinion here expressed; that gentleman says—"Perhaps the Western Britons were less disturbed by wars than any other people in the island, during the whole time of the Heptarchy. They bordered only upon Wessex, which was generally the best governed of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, was strong enough, for the most part, to make them quiet neighbours; and was too much occupied on other sides to think of molesting them. Exeter continued long to be a half Welsh town, just as Friburg, in Switzerland, is still divided between the two languages. During such a state of things, the bards had leisure to keep up the old religion in all its forms, and make the last stand against Christianity."

end, by lessening the frequency of human sacrifices. The people, who had been accustomed to witness this wanton immolation of their fellow-creatures, became less barbarous: murder ceased to be a spectacle; the keen relish for human blood, which in all nations such savage rites never fail to create, died away; and the first noisome weed that would have impeded the growth of the good seed being thus, by divine Providence, cast out, the ground was gradually prepared to receive the future blessings of the tree of life: a tree which once having taken root in this island, though grievously assailed by subsequent storms and tempests; though its branches were lopped off, or consumed in the fire, yet, watered by the blood of saints and martyrs, has never been withered, or torn from the soil; but has flourished, and, with God's blessing, still shall flourish, unskaken by those infidel hands, which, even in our days, would raise themselves to level its sacred head with the dust.

However much of superstition, or of fraud, there might have been in the church at a very early period, yet, even in its corrupt state, its benefits were incalculably great to a land that had so long been buried in the darkness and cruelties of paganism. Christianity, in every country where it takes root, as its first fruits, improves the wretched estate of the slave, the poor, and the women; since, by teaching man that he is a responsible being, it makes him become a reasonable one. How great must have been the change in Britain produced by planting the doctrines of Christ in lieu of those which were said to be derived from Odin or from Belus, when the one true and only sacrifice, the Son of God himself,

once offered on the cross for the sins of the whole world, was taught instead of the cruel butcheries, which, like those of their eastern ancestors, were

> "Abominations! and with cursed things
> His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
> And with their darkness durst affront his light,
> First Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood—
> Of human sacrifice and parents' tears!"

The barbarisms too of divination, of consulting the entrails of human beings and of animals, whilst they were yet panting under the knife, were abolished. This custom had, no doubt, its origin in that restless desire of man (the strong and natural proof of his immortality) to penetrate beyond the veil which lies between him and his future destiny. With no people was this desire more apparent than with the ancient Britons, who undertook no wars, or actions of any import, without consulting the lots or augury of the priests. Christianity rooted out this presumptuous and vain inquiry, and taught men to trust Him for the disposal of the future, who can alone direct all events with an unerring hand.

To draw a comparison between sacred and profane things, it might be said of the early Christian Missionary in his overthrow of augury, and preaching the glad tidings of the gospel in its stead, that like Prometheus, as he is made to recite his acts by the poet Æschylus, he took from man the power of searching out his future destiny, but gave him a far better boon—even Hope in its stead. Surely this was a very just and beautiful allegory in the Greek dramatist; since, could men know the miseries they will suffer in their progress through life, the source of honourable or necessary exertion would become

dried up and barren; but Hope, as a perennial fountain, plays on from an exhaustless spring, and affords her refreshing draughts to the pilgrim of the world, even to the last and closing hour of his weary journey towards the tomb.

After the Anglo-Saxons were settled in this part of the island, Christianity was first propagated in the kingdom of Wessex, during the reign of Cynegils, by Byrinus (A. D. 634), who, finding the people idolaters, undertook their conversion with the sanction of Pope Honorius. The first episcopal see was in the city of Dorcester, not the Roman station, but, according to Fuller, an old city in Oxfordshire, where a church was erected. On the death of Byrinus, the kingdom in which he had planted the good seed was cruelly torn and divided; for that fierce idolater Penda, king of Mercia, invaded and conquered it; and not till the rightful and Christian heir of the crown was restored, did Wessex again taste the blessings of peace and of the gospel. Several worthy ecclesiastics were now favoured by the prince, and received by the people; and the spirit of God, "mighty in word and works," was everywhere spread abroad with the happiest effects. Many churches were built, and the magnificent structure, Winchester Cathedral, was first commenced by Cenowalch, who there fixed Wina as its bishop.

The civil wars which succeeded the death of the king, though they might for a while impede the growth, did not extirpate the fruits of Christianity, and soon after the kingdom being divided into two dioceses, Winchester and Sherborne, Devonshire, in ecclesiastical matters, came under the jurisdiction

of the latter. Good Bishop Aldhelm then filled the see, and ruled with great prudence, learning and piety. In process of time Devonshire had bishops of its own, who were stationed at Tawton, Crediton, and Exeter. The first Bishops, Werstanus and Putta, were appointed about the beginning of the tenth century; the last-named met with a violent death; since, on visiting at Crediton an officer of the royal household, from some unknown cause, he was slain by one of Uffa's men. Putta was succeeded by Eadulphus, Ethelgarus, and Algarus. The last having sat ten years, gave up his see to Alfodus, in consequence of the strenuous exertions of the famous St. Dunstan. This occurred about the year 962. He was succeeded in 970 by Alfwolgus. It must, therefore, have been during the time of Bishop Algarus, and of Edgar, king of Wessex, that Tavistock Abbey was first founded by Orgar, Earl, or Herotoge of Devon.

That once magnificent abbey is now in ruins;—the writer of this letter dwells within the boundary of its venerable walls; nor is that dwelling, though become familiar by long use, unassociated with those recollections which render such a habitation replete with local interest and feeling. The grey walls; the mouldering tower with its ruined windows, once gorgeous in the glowing hues of their stained glass, through whose empty space the wind now whistles in melancholy cadence; the "ivy-mantled" arch; the winding steps; the entry, strewn with fragments of those columns which once upheld the stately roof, where now the bat waves her dusky wing, and all of former times is silent, or forgotten, saving the whisperings of superstition, that have peopled even this

poor archway with the ghosts of the dead!—are all objects that cannot be contemplated without some thoughts that lead us to dwell on the rapid flight of time; the mutability of governments; the passions of men, and their violence even in a just cause—for the greater part of the ruin before our eyes was the work of the Reformation. Who but would lament this, when he reflects how much there is of evil that mingles itself with human actions, however good may be their aim! We see the effects of those passions which exceeded the limits of reason or necessity, and but hastened that decay which is the final doom of all things here on earth. This is a lesson that may be taught even by such speechless monitors as these old abbey walls. We look on the last fragment now left of the abbey church itself,* and call up the remembrance of what it was in the strength and beauty of its early days,—a holy fane, stately in every proportion, decorated with every ornament the sculptor's art could supply, and hung with jewelled pomp, bestowed by nobles and kings, to render it a temple fitted, in outward splendour, to the worship of Him in whose keeping are the hearts of kings, and from whose hand the royal crown is placed upon their brows.

Orgar, to whose munificence the Western Church was indebted for the abbey, which, no doubt, gave rise to the wealth and importance of the town, was born in or near Tavistock, and held the rank and office of earl, or alderman, of Devon. The court in which an earl presided met twice a year, after Michaelmas and Easter; it was composed of the freeholders of the shire, who had a voice in the decisions.

* The archway, said to be Orgar's tomb.

The bishop also presided in it with the earl, (so early was the spiritual combined with the civil authorities in this kingdom,) whose rank was the highest in the order of thanes. Before the time of Alfred the Great this nobleman ruled in the county with the power of a petty king, since all affairs, civil as well as military, were within his absolute control. Such power Alfred, with that wisdom which distinguished all his actions and his laws, considered too much to be vested in the person of any subject; and, as some counterpoise, he appointed a sheriff in each shire, who, in all matters of jurisprudence, should have an equal authority, and should guard the dues of the crown from any abuses or misappropriation.

During the early periods of the Heptarchy the sovereign might nominate the earl of a county, and could deprive him of his rank, if he wilfully suffered a notorious robber to escape justice; but in process of time he was more frequently elected at the shire-gemot, a general court, by the voice of the freeholders of land; and Alfred, who was so true a friend to liberty that he left it recorded in his will, that a native of England "should be free as his own thoughts," was nevertheless too wise to fancy that real liberty could be long maintained if it degenerated into licentiousness. He supported, therefore, the full power vested in the freeholder of land, who had a stake in the country; but never did he suffer power to fall into the hands of the mob, certain that the base in spirit will ever be the turbulent in action; and therefore, even for their own sakes, ought to be held in subjection. Well would it be for modern politicians (though to say so now is an offence), did they think it possible they might be taught some wisdom

even by our Saxon ancestors; for though the mob may now be more enlightened, yet whether they have learned to know what is good for themselves may yet be questionable; and unless morals keep pace with knowledge, the acquisition of the latter will but teach them to act their "old sins" with more cunning, but not with less ferocity, or with less ill effects than in the most barbarous times. In proof of this, witness the French Revolution of forty years ago, when the mob of enlightened Paris and elsewhere bathed themselves in blood, as if in their natural element.

The office of earl was not at first hereditary, though in process of years it became such by the increasing fitness, learning, and wealth of the aristocracy. In times of war the earl assumed the title of duke, or heretoge, a title which signified a leader.* He was a member also of the Wittenagemote, or assembly of wise men, the parliament of the Anglo-Saxons. Such was the rank and office of Orgar, the founder of our abbey, the father of Elfrida; and ere we turn to the history of that monastic building, it will be proper to say something respecting that of the earl and his celebrated daughter.

Indeed, the story of Elfrida forms so striking a feature in the history of this place, and as *one particular event* connected with it has been a subject of discussion with antiquaries, there needs no apology for here reverting even to those very circumstances which are already so well known.

The daughter of Orgar, Earl of Devon, had acquired such reputation for her charms, that it excited the curiosity and interest of the king, whose passion-

* Heretoge or Duke; words which, the former derived from the Saxon, and the latter from the Latin, equally signify a leader.

ate admiration of beauty had already induced him to commit many immoral actions, which Dunstan (then Archbishop of Canterbury, and the keeper of his conscience) let pass on terms of easy reprehension; though for a marriage contracted within what the Church of Rome pleased to consider a prohibited degree, he had, in the former reign, persecuted with the utmost bitterness the youthful and royal pair, Edwy and Elgiva. But Edgar was more friendly to the views of the primate, and to the monks; and was, also, as hard upon the married clergy as Dunstan could desire he should be. To treat, therefore, his amours with lenity, or to absolve them on the easiest possible penance, might have been considered as a grateful return for obligations such as these.

In order to satisfy his curiosity, Edgar deputed his friend and favourite, Earl Ethelwold, to visit Elfrida at her father's palace, which was situated in or near Tavistock; and Ethelwold, as we shall presently find, being considerably older than the young lady, perhaps there was not so much imprudence in the act as, on the first view, might be suspected. The object of the favourite's journey was to ascertain if she might really be possessed of that surpassing beauty which fame had ascribed to her, and if so, to offer her, on the part of the king, a crown, as queen and consort of England. We see, by this, that Edgar must have entertained a very good opinion of his friend's taste; and we also see that he acted quite in character, and evinced no other desire in taking a wife than of finding her very handsome. Such a motive, when it stands alone, has nothing in it of that delicacy which gives grace and dignity to the youthful passion of love; since we hear nothing

of Edgar's being anxious to ascertain if she were good as well as fair, and possessed those amiable qualities of mind, which are beauties of so high an order, that they will not only survive the attractions of outward form and feature, but render woman in her decline scarcely less dear and estimable than in the blossom or flower of her youth.

Ethelwold, no doubt, set off with every intention to execute his charge honestly towards the king; but the poet writes—

> "Friendship is constant in all other things,
> Save in the office and affairs of love:
> Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues.
> Let every eye negotiate for itself,
> And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch
> Against whose charms faith melteth into blood."

Edgar had yet to learn this lesson, and Shakspeare was not then born to teach it.

The court of Orgar, equal in splendour to that of many of the Saxon princes, received its greatest lustre from the personal character of its lord. Munificent and courteous, zealous for the church, brave and noble, Orgar, indeed, was a man whose alliance might be sought by Edgar as one the most honourable the age and the kingdom could afford. Nor was he, at this period, less happy in his domestic than in his public fortunes. His son Ordulph, of gigantic stature and strength,* possessed a courage not inferior in proportion to those extraordinary physical powers with which it was combined. He was, also, of such eminent piety that, according to the monkish historians, Heaven deigned to visit him with visions and dreams; to one of which, hereafter to be told,

* The thigh bone of Ordulph is still preserved in Tavistock church.

we are indebted for the foundation of our abbey on the banks of his native Tavy.

Elfrida was the only daughter of this illustrious earl. Young, lovely, and living in comparative seclusion under Orgar's care, amidst the shadowy groves and sweet retirement of Devon, she had not yet known those temptations, which, in after years, awaking in her bosom the passions of pride, self-will, and ambition, led her, step by step, to the commission of those foul crimes that, however much her outward form might resemble a spirit of light, cast over her soul a darkness that rendered it fit for those regions where hope never comes.

At the time Ethelwold first beheld her, it is most likely he saw nothing in her that could lead him to suspect she was less amiable than beautiful. He saw and loved her for her surpassing fairness. Beauty is considered by moralists and divines as a dangerous gift: no doubt it is so unless it is governed by those precepts of virtue and religion which render it harmless. Yet, when thus governed, surely, as the gift of God, it must be numbered amongst his blessings. There is a law to regulate all things of the earth and of the spirit. The "heavenly arch" that hangs above our heads, and compasses the whole celestial spheres, is beautiful with order and with light, and, as the stay of all creation, is obedient to the Hand that raised it. That "heavenly arch" exalts not itself, but its Maker. So should it be with human beauty; and, when so considered, to condemn the fair gift of an infinite and wise Disposer of all gifts is as great a folly as it would be to censure, or to look with indifference on a delightful landscape, or to prefer the hard and barren

ground to mountain and valley clothed with wood, and lovely in the mantle of its verdure and its flowers. It is the pride, the contempt, the vain heart and the wandering eye, to which ill-governed beauty so often gives birth, that becomes an offence to God, and injurious to man, not the thing itself. Had Elfrida remembered that she was formed after the image of her Creator; that her body might be as a temple, pure and fitted for His holy spirit, she might have lived and died in innocence, and have even taken a harmless delight in her own loveliness the same as a child may do, who smiles to see its own rosy smiles reflected in a glass.

Ethelwold thus captivated by her charms, unmindful of his honour and unfaithful to his trust, demanded her hand not for Edgar, but himself. Orgar, ignorant of the more elevated fortune to which his daughter was justly entitled by the intentions of the king, and in all probability deeming his favourite an advantageous match for her, consented, provided Ethelwold might gain Edgar's approval of the marriage. Besides the respect which Orgar wished to show the king, there might be some policy in thus referring to him to sanction the proposal of the favourite; since the time had not yet arrived that rendered a Saxon earl of a shire in a great measure independent of any authority higher than his own. The king had then the power to nominate the alderman of a county; the office was not yet hereditary in its succession; so that the reigning prince might become troublesome should he take offence at any act that bordered on too much independence of his will.

To obtain Edgar's consent to marry the very

woman Ethelwold had been deputed to visit on his account, must have been a difficulty which none but a crafty man would have attempted; as, by a fair statement of the case, the enamoured earl must have been certain such consent would be withheld. Despairing of success by honest means, Ethelwold had recourse to artifice: and as such schemes generally end in open shame or misery, even so was it in this instance; since, in obtaining his object by falsehood, he did but eventually "commend the poisoned chalice to his own lips." He now abused the king's ear with the report, that though Elfrida was fair, her beauty was not equal to the celebrity it had acquired; no doubt her rank and fortune had been the cause of her personal attractions being thus magnified by the common voice of fame. And he took occasion to intimate, that though such advantages could be of no value to the king, they would be of great benefit to a nobleman of his court, and finally requested permission to marry her himself, as a means of raising his fortune. The king, suspecting no deceit, consented; and the marriage was solemnized; but Etholwold, fearful of the consequence, held his bride in the utmost seclusion in Devon, lest, meeting the eye of Edgar, her fair face should at once betray the artifice by which he had made her his own.

But however much he might labour to hide it, Ethelwold's falsehood could not long be concealed. Some, no doubt, were glad to avail themselves of this fault, to effect his downfall; for never was a king's favourite yet found without enemies. The slighted or discontented courtiers hate him from envy; the ambitious desire his removal to make

way for themselves; and the vulgar, who fear to fasten their complaints on a higher quarter, will assign to his influence most acts of misgovernment, and ascribe to him whatever motive may suit their own humours. No sooner had Edgar received the intimation that his confidence had been abused, than he resolved to discover the truth. For this purpose he went to Exeter; and thence sent word to the Earl of Devon, with whom Elfrida and her husband were residing, that he designed speedily to be with him, to hunt in the forest of Dartmoor adjoining. The guilty Ethelwold, suspecting the true cause of the royal visit, now found that confidence which had enabled him to act with such duplicity, in a moment forsake him: he had no resource left; but, acquainting his wife with the truth, entreated her by the plainness of her dress, to conceal her charms as much as possible from the eyes of a monarch whose susceptible and light disposition would so little enable him to resist them.

Elfrida promised compliance; but, prompted by vanity, and by resentment towards her husband for having been the means to deprive her of a crown, she used every art to set forth her beauty to the greatest advantage, and inflamed the king with so violent a passion, that he resolved to revenge himself on his perfidious favourite. On the following morning, whilst they were hunting, he watched an opportunity, and taking Ethelwold at an advantage, slew him; and at a place in Dartmoor forest called Wilverley, since Warlwood, the earl was found slain with an arrow, or, according to Malmesbury, run through the body with a javelin.

That historian, also, states, that the illegitimate

son of Ethelwold approached the king immediately after the commission of his father's murder, and on Edgar's asking him "How he liked that kind of game?" barbarously and servilely replied, "Well, my sovereign liege; I ought not to be displeased with that which pleases you." The king, who could be brutal enough to put such a question at such a moment to a son, was quite capable of being pleased with the unnatural answer; and the young man from that hour succeeded to his father's place in the royal favour, which he held till the death of that monarch. From the circumstance of this illegitimate son being a man grown at the time of his father's death, we may gather that Ethelwold must have been much older than his wife, or his murderer; since Edgar, who soon after married Elfrida (probably younger than himself,) lived with her some years, and died at the early age of thirty-two.

Edward, the child of his first marriage, succeeded to the throne; but Elfrida was anxious that her son Ethelred should be king. In consequence of this determination, about four years after Edgar's death, she took an opportunity of ridding Ethelred of the only impediment that stood between him and the "golden round" that she longed to see glitter upon his brow. For her son-in-law, Edward, chancing one day to call at her castle gate, she hastened to receive him; and though the young king refused to alight from his horse, he accepted the stirrup-cup she offered, as the customary mark of hospitality. Whilst engaged in drinking, the unfortunate Edward was, by her order, stabbed in the back, by the hand of a ruffian. He rode off immediately, mortally wounded; and at length dropped dead from his horse, near the

door of a poor blind cottager; and the body was found by Elfrida's people, who had pursued Edward by tracking his blood. Thinking to conceal so foul a crime, this cruel step-mother caused the corpse to be thrown into a well; but, a few days after, it was discovered and buried.

Such was the guilt of this miserable woman. It does not appear, however, that she was accessory to the death of Ethelwold. I am aware that the place where he fell has become a subject of doubt. I shall here, therefore, give the different opinions that may be cited, and leave you to determine which approaches nearest to the truth. Prince, in his curious work, the 'Worthies of Devon,' expressly says, that Earl Ethelwold was killed at *Wilverley*, since Warlwood, in the forest of Dartmoor. There is a place near Dartmoor, to this day called *Willsworthy;* and Prince makes this assertion on the authority of 'Risdon's Manuscript Survey of Devon in Tavist.' Risdon's reputation stands so deservedly high as an antiquary, who in his day had examined many ancient records, that, from whatever source *he* derived his opinion, it is worthy attention.

William of Malmesbury, on the contrary, says that Ethelwold was slain by Edgar whilst hunting "in a wood at *Warewelle*, or *Harewood*, in Dorsetshire." But Browne, the poet, has proved, in the instance of the river Tavy being printed the river Tau, that the printed copies of Malmesbury differed in that point from the manuscript one of "*Malmesbury's time*," in the possession of his "learned friend Mr. Selden." No doubt this error arose from the carelessness of transcribers; and if the name of one

place might be thus erroneously stated, even so might be that of another.

Some antiquaries, unacquainted with the localities of Earl Orgar's territory, and never suspecting any printed copy of Malmesbury could be incorrect, overlooked his error about the county, and, determining to keep as close as possible to *Devon*, placed the scene of Ethelwold's death on the opposite side the river Tamar, at *Harewood* in *Cornwall!* This, I do not hesitate to say, is a most improbable conjecture; since, in order to reach it, Edgar must have encountered the most formidable difficulties; those of riding many miles about, through forests vast and intricate, and rendered dangerous of access by a river so broad and deep as the Tamar; for no bridge could at any time have existed nearer than Newbridge, a structure of a much later period: whilst on the other hand, the forest of Dartmoor lay contiguous to Tavistock, where Orgar, the father of Elfrida, had a palace; and where Ethelwold and his beautiful wife were residing with him, when Edgar surprised them by that visit which ended so fatally for the husband.

Some have supposed the woods of Warleigh—and certainly with much better reason than those of Harewood—to have been the scene of the murder. To reach those woods, no river intervened to render access to them either difficult or dangerous. Besides, they were in all respects fitted for the pleasures of the chase. If, however, it was improbable that Edgar should cross the river into Cornwall to commit the murder, still less likely is it (as some antiquaries aver) that he should ride so far as into

Dorsetshire for that purpose. The historian Malmesbury possibly might have been mistaken when he says that Elfrida built a nunnery at Warewelle, or Harewood in *Dorset,* on the spot where her *husband* was slain. After the death of her second husband (the king who killed her first) she retired to Corfe Castle, where she caused his unfortunate son to be stabbed at her gate. He rode off, but his body was found in a wood in *Dorsetshire.* Might it not therefore, have been in consequence of *this* circumstance that, after she was awakened to remorse, she erected the nunnery in expiation of so atrocious a crime? The death of Ethelwold probably cost her no remorse, since there is no evidence that she had any share in that murder*.

As a strong confirmation of this opinion, I shall here cite the following passage from the Saxon Chronicle. "This year" (978,) "King Edward was slain at Corfes-geat (Corfe Castle) in the evening of the 15th of the Calends of April, and he was buried at *Wareham* without any royal honours. No worse deed than this had been committed amongst the people of the Angles since they first came to the land of Britain†." Now, when we recollect that Malmesbury says Elfrida built her nunnery at Warewelle wood, in Dorsetshire; that Edward dropt dead from his horse in a wood, and was buried as above stated, I cannot help thinking *Warewelle* and *Wareham* were contiguous, and that the nunnery was erected on the spot where *his* body was found, and not Ethel-

* Rapin says Elfrida founded *two* nunneries as an atonement for her crimes; one at Ambresbury in Wilts, and the other at Warewelle or Whorwel in Dorset.

† Miss Gurney's translation.

wold.* It is absolutely necessary in all doubtful points to compare one fact with another, as the most careful chronicler will sometimes fall into an error; or mistakes (as Browne discovered in Malmesbury) may have been committed for him in transcription. Whilst in Britanny, by an attentive examination of the localities of Auray, we discovered an error made even by Froissart, respecting the spot where the great battle was fought between De Blois and De Montfort. For want of collating, even Hume committed a mistake about Elfrida; for, when speaking of her marriage, he says she was the daughter and *heir* of the Earl of Devon; this could not have been the case, as her brother Ordulph was then living.

Elfrida, about the time she built the nunnery at *Warewelle*, was not only held in execration by the people of England, but she became a prey to a state of remorse bordering on despair. Her alarmed conscience represented to her imagination a fiend that was ever present before her eyes, on the watch to seize her soul to convey it to a place of torture. Her days and nights became horrible; and she was heard to shriek and wail, as if endeavouring to escape the grasp of this imaginary phantom. She clothed herself with such armour as was then considered invulnerable to the shafts of infernal malice—a robe covered with crosses: and, giving herself up to the rigors and seclusion of her nunnery, she there died a miserable, but striking example of the retributive

* Though Edward the Martyr was buried at *Wareham*, he did not long rest there; for, in 980, the Saxon Chronicle states that "St. Dunstan and the Alderman Ælfhere fetched the body of the holy King St. Edward from Wareham, and brought it with great pomp to Shaftesbury."

justice of Heaven, which thus visited her crimes by the bitter and enduring agonies of remorse.

Before I quit the subject of Edward's murder, I cannot resist giving the following passage from the Saxon Chronicle, as it serves to show with what just indignation the crime was considered. In speaking of his death, that venerable record says—"His mortal kinsmen would not avenge him, but his Heavenly Father hath avenged him greatly. His earthly murderers would have blotted out his memory from the world, but the avenger, who is above, hath widely extended his fame in heaven and earth: and whereas they formerly would not bow down before his living body, now they piteously bend their knees to his dead bones."

So universal was the consternation with which all were seized on hearing of this event, that no man, after such an example of treachery, held his life to be safe. The murder, too, had been committed in violation of the common laws of hospitality hitherto considered sacred. Deep drinking, the vice of the age, which both the Saxons and the Danish marauders had contributed to render familiar, was, for awhile, discontinued; since no one would trust himself in the unguarded posture of partaking of the social cup, for fear it should be followed by the blow of an assassin. Hence, as we are told by Malmesbury, each man before he tasted of the "wassail bowl" required a pledge from his companion that he would watch over and protect him whilst engaged in the act. By all antiquaries this is considered the origin of the familiar expression of pledging, or desiring another to partake first of the cup.

I have already alluded to Mason's Elfrida; and

that, following the popular error, he had laid the scene of his drama in Harewood forest, in Cornwall. This, however, is a trifling mistake compared to Miss Seward's; who, in one of her letters, on visiting Gawthorpe Hall, the seat of Lord Harewood, in *Yorkshire*, talks about "the poignancy of her sensations," "Harewood's glassy waters" shining through "tangled brakes in the glens," "expanding into lakes" and "sleeping on lawns," whilst all the charm of these delights she experienced on this "classic ground" (situated in Yorkshire) was conveyed by its connexion with the story and the drama of Elfrida! Mason took liberties enough with that story to destroy almost all historical truth; and Miss Seward goes a step beyond him: for she, something like Mr. Bayes's prologue, where the sun, moon, and earth dance the hays, makes Yorkshire take the place of Devonshire with no more ado than the flourish of a pen. I notice this out of no motive of disparagement to Miss Seward, of whose writings (excepting this letter about Harewood) I know very little. But she has reputation: and, therefore, so gross an error ought to be remarked, lest it should mislead those who, being under the dominion of "a name," may think what such a lady as Miss Seward asserts must be true.

Wishing to refresh my memory respecting what Mason had made of the story of Elfrida, I last night read his drama, and his letters on the subject of his composing it on the Greek model; and though his play contains some very beautiful poetry, as I closed the book, I could not help feeling the truth of what was so long ago said by Horace—"Incredulus odi." Poems, dramas, and romances, though each, when

founded on historical subjects, affords the greatest delight, should I think, if I may venture to give any opinion, be always made subservient to some useful purpose; and should never falsify the truth of history in any really important point. In many works, as the historical plays of Shakspeare, and the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, information and instruction accompany delight. Who, for instance, has ever read Coriolanus or Julius Cæsar, without becoming familiarly acquainted with some of the most interesting characters and events of the Roman history? or Henry IV. and Henry VIII. without feeling as if he were living in the very days of those Princes? And who has ever read "Old Mortality," and many other of those masterly and lively fictions, without becoming familiar with the spirit of the times therein described, and fancying himself carried back to the very scenes in which the characters of the story bore so prominent a part?

But this praise can scarcely be given to Mason, who in his drama of Elfrida preserved little more of truth in his historical characters than their names; and has consequently perverted facts. He tells us, in his letters, that a chorus ought to be introduced in every tragedy, "to advance the cause of honesty and of truth," and that, for want of this, an audience will often go from a play with very false impressions. To follow the rule he has thus laid down, he ought to have made his own chorusses in Elfrida have but one burthen to their songs, and it should have been—"This story is all false;" then neither audience nor reader could have mistaken the matter. For if truth be in *historical* fiction what the soul is to the body—the cause of its usefulness, its vitality, and its in-

terest in a moral view, we may say, comparatively, of the flowers of poetry which Mason has so abundantly scattered throughout his drama of Elfrida, that they are but as flowers scattered upon a corpse.

No female character throughout the whole history of this country is stained with a worse crime than that of Elfrida: yet Mason represents her as if she had been as gentle and as amiable as a Lady Jane Grey; and as constant and as virtuous in her love to her husband Ethelwold, as a Lady Rachel Russel. Though Elfrida had purposely set off her charms with art to allure the king, and became immediately after her husband's death the wife of his murderer, yet the poet ends the play by making her swear to die a widow for Ethelwold's sake! and the vow is echoed by the chorus, stationed on the scene to "advance the cause of truth" with the reader or spectator. It may also be remarked, that the poet has gained nothing by thus falsifying historical facts, since the true story is more suited to the muse of tragedy, whose emblems, the dagger and the poisoned bowl, proclaim her to be the queen of terror. It is also more replete with dramatic interest than his alterations; and if he wanted fiction, he might have resorted to it without the change of a single event. The monastic character of the times would have opened to him a fine field; and the superstitious legends, then so generally credited, would have furnished him with a sufficient apology, had he introduced an old monk, with a black cowl and a long beard, who, like the chorus, might have been made a sort of monitor to the passions of the scene; and who, in his prophetic character, (for prophecy and visions were common with the monks,) might have

warned or foretold Elfrida the miseries that would follow as the consequences of her pride, her cruelty, and her ambition.

But I have done; for though a little angry with Mason for altering and perverting the story of our Tavistock heroine, no one admires him more than I do; and if he had never written any thing else, such noble poetry as we find in his Caractacus would have placed him in the first rank of modern bards.

This letter having extended much farther than I designed it should when I took up the pen, I must defer the account of the Abbey till another opportunity: in the interval, allow me to remain,

My dear Sir,

With respectful esteem,

Very faithfully yours,

ANNA E. BRAY.

LETTER XXIII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Religious influence on the character of Nations—That of Pagan countries contrasted with Christian—Saxon Church—On the spirit of the old Catholic Faith—Its great benefits to this Country—Its defects—Monasteries eminently useful—How beneficial to the education of Youth—Religious Spirit of the Monasteries—Their destruction in this Country deeply deplored—The opinion of Montesinos on the subject quoted—The subject continued, and the benefit of places of religious retirement further considered—Disadvantages of the Monastic Life to some particular dispositions; to whom dangerous—Credulity the character of former Ages; its opposite of the present—The influence of spiritual agency, ever active though unseen—The dead may appear to the living—Dreams, not on all occasions to be held in contempt—Sometimes show the agency of the Spirits of God—Addison's opinion of dreams; Bishop Bull's given—Dreams exaggerated, sometimes invented by the old Chroniclers—Tavistock Abbey had its origin from a dream—Orgar founder of that Abbey—Ordulph his Son—The dream related—Benedictines—Augustines—Ordulph's wonderful acts as related by Malmesbury—A ruined arch described; the only remaining fragment of the once magnificent Abbey Church of Tavistock—erroneously called Childe's Tomb—Amusing story of old Childe's Horse—Friars of Plymstock—Their cunning—Guile Bridge—Abbey, to whom dedicated—St. Rumon; his History—Abbey Church finished and dedicated—Ethelred's Charter—Almer the first Abbot.

Vicarage, Tavistock, June 11, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

BEFORE entering upon the history of our Abbey, in its foundation, its prosperity, and its overthrow, I may, perhaps, be pardoned if I still en-

deavour, by a few prefatory remarks, to keep in view the general state of morals and religion, since abbeys and towns, like the fortunes of individuals, are in a very great degree indebted for their prosperity or their decline to the state of the country in which they exist. And I cannot but repeat that in all these letters I bear in mind the possibility that they may one day take their chance in the *world* of letters. Such being the case, I write about many things which I should not venture to touch upon with you, did I not think that, to the mere general reader, they may hereafter be of some little interest. This, therefore, is my apology for what I am now about to say.

All nations throughout the world, more or less, take their character from their religion; and it follows, as a necessary consequence, that where true religion is best practised and understood, there will men become the best and the most enlightened. The gods of barbarous nations are represented as fierce and bloody, and the barbarian is both. Those of Greece and Rome were warlike and luxurious, and the people were remarkable for war and luxury. And though they had amongst them a few such admirable persons as Socrates and Marcus Antoninus, yet the general character of their greatest and their best men was essentially different from that of the Christian philosopher.

The gentler virtues, the self-subduing spirit, inculcated by Christianity, which makes forgiveness of an enemy, and the returning good for evil, duties of the noblest kind, were unknown; and we therefore find no such men amongst the heathen worthies as our good Bishop Andrews, our Hooker, our Jeremy Taylor, or those humble and devout martyrs who,

with a courage that equalled any ever displayed by the heroes of antiquity, had yet the meekness and the tenderness of the dove, that beautiful emblem of that holy spirit which dwelt within and sanctified both their hearts and minds. In the modern nations of the East we find a religion in which tyranny, sensuality, and slavery have each a place; and the Turks, we know, are remarkable for every one of those vices. To extend similar observations as far as they might be carried would exceed the limits or the purpose for which they are here introduced, since they alone are ventured in support of the opinion, that the better character of the Saxons as a people, and the progress they so rapidly made in civilization, after their settlement in this kingdom, must be attributed to their conversion to Christianity.

We have traced the various modes of worship which were introduced and practised in this part of England from the time of the Britons to that of the Saxons; and these, like all other diversities of religion, show that it is natural in man during this his pilgrimage of labour and sorrow, to look up to some supreme power with the eye of hope. But such false creeds had no beneficial effects on his moral character, because they neither enlightened his understanding nor touched his heart.

The introduction of Christianity was, therefore, in every way a blessing; and notwithstanding the setting up traditions and inventions of men as even of more import than the written word of God, rendered it both corrupt and superstitious, yet the history of this country will serve to show how powerfully and how happily, even in this state, Christianity acted on

society at large. It was as the dawn of day after a long and black night. But it was reserved for the Reformation to dispel every noxious vapour of human opinion that arose from the earth, and to go forth with the splendour of an unclouded sun, when there was "perfect day."

It was the observation of Cicero, in censure of the poet, that, instead of raising men to live after the manner of the gods, Homer brought heaven down to earth, and made the gods live after the manner of men. The same kind of censure may be passed on the inventors of the Romish frauds and traditions; for the things they added to the truth are more of earth than of the spirit, and were most flattering to human passion, whilst, adding many deities to their creed (for surely they made the Virgin and the saints such), they taught them to be propitiated with rich gifts more after the manner of worldly princes than as inhabitants of heaven.

There are many who deem it uncharitable to speak thus of a church which acknowledges the Son of God as its Head. Let such, however, have but an acquaintance with the interior of a convent; let them enter into free conversation with the best and the most rational there bound by irrevocable vows, and if their heart and soul does not sicken at the superstitions they will there both hear and see, they can have no just sense of the faith they themselves profess, or of that true charity which, though it may pity the individuals who are the victims of such credulity, feels no obligation not to visit with severe censure those things which are an offence to God's honour, since they are a perversion of his revealed word.

And thus having endeavoured to show that I am

neither dazzled nor misled by the poetic and imaginative character of the Church of Rome, (for hers is the best calculated of all religions for poetry and romance,) I shall venture a few remarks on the benefits of monastic institutions, as they existed, till we had the pure faith restored to us in this country. If our Protestant faith (as the Romanists charge against it) have more lax members than the old religion, if it have many sectaries, and if, alas, many infidels have sprung up among us since the Reformation, the fault is not in the thing itself. It is a fault that may be charged, perhaps, to an excess of one of its chief virtues—its perfect toleration; in other words, to its want of that severe discipline, (which, whilst the Roman faith held sway, allowed no such practices, by claiming and holding a power over the conscience of all men,) the smallest exercise of which in our church would now be reckoned insufferable tyranny. But no abuse of any thing can affect the thing itself: medicine is a blessing to mankind, though there are quacks and pretenders who sometimes make it a curse. Bread is the staff of life, though, as an old writer truly observes, its adulteration will make it no better than a crutch to help a man to the grave.

That monasteries, in former ages, were eminently useful cannot, I think, be denied. In those early times when the art of printing was unknown, all learning was found within the cloister. The regularity, the repose, and the leisure of a monastic life were absolutely necessary to the preservation and the culture of letters. Every monastery, also, had its school, and the novices were, in many instances, scholars. The sons of princes and nobles were generally edu-

cated within the walls; and no rank or station was held to be above obedience to the church. There youth were instructed, and those habits of submission, so salutary in themselves, so necessary for individual happiness, (since it is by obeying others that men learn to master their own passions,) were inculcated as a first and essential duty. Youth did not then, with the frowardness so often seen in modern times, burst those restraints which were intended not to curb the spirit, but the waywardness of unripened years. And age, as in the patriarchal state, was looked up to with that deference and respect which wisdom, derived from experience —its most certain source—is ever entitled to command. There is something beautiful in the picture of a young man, with all his ardour, his golden hopes, and airy imaginings, standing silent with modesty, in the presence of the aged, and listening to those counsels that are to guide his future course.

Regularity, without which there is little profit in study, was rigidly enforced by those minute rules that gave to each hour its appropriate task, its duties, and its relaxations. Young men of talent, but with half-knowledge, flippancy, and conceit, did not then fancy that in matters of religion, or of civil government, they could carve out a way for themselves that would be better than the old road trodden by their fathers. There was then little or no infidelity: for the student did not doubt those sacred truths which were above his capacity or his years; nor did he presume to fix bounds and limits to the all-wise providence of God, or to make the greatest things the least, by measuring them after the standard of his own ignorance. Singularity was not then mistaken

for superiority; consequently it did not raise a false ambition in the weak and the vain to become singular, or to show their own folly in the effort to be wise beyond that which was written for their learning.

Obedience to rulers, governors, and parents was, with them, the promise in the spring-time of their days; and honour and wisdom became their summer fruits. How beautiful an example have we of this in the life of the great and good Sir Thomas More, who always, on first seeing his father for the day, knelt down and reverently begged his blessing. "*Train up a child in the way he should go,*" says Solomon, "*and when he is old he will not depart from it.*" This was done, according to the religion of the times, and the child, from early habit, found submission no state of bondage.

Nothwithstanding the faults and superstitions of a monastic education, this early habit of obedience, as a religious duty, was to it as the salt of the whole; and the heroes of chivalry were thus prepared to follow, without a murmur, through pain, toil, and death, wherever the call of duty—even though its object might sometimes be mistaken—should summon them to appear. The knights who, amid the arid and burning sands of Syria, rescued from infidels, at the call of a hermit, the sacred sepulchre of Jerusalem, afford a striking instance of that devoted spirit of obedience which men in those times thought it their chief glory to pay to their religion.

The little child who was to receive education went daily to the convent school; and old age frequently took the vows, and made choice of its abode within the walls. There is something peculiarly touching in the extremes of human existence. Both

call forth tenderness and pity; for, in a great measure, both are helpless. We surely may consider them as more especially the care of Providence; since a creature in the dawn of life, or near its close, could not for a single hour sustain, unassisted, his own weakness.

To him, whose strong desires were not of the flesh, but fixed on the spirit which is immortal—a spirit which sees God in the sacred ordinances of his church, and listens to those hymns and holy psalms that speak his praise, as if they were the responses of "quiring angels,"—there was a beauty and a majesty in the house of the Lord, "The temple where His honour dwelleth," that not the castles of nobles, nor the palaces of princes could afford; and there he sought his rest.

But such a retreat was welcome, above all, to such as had experienced the losses and cares inseparable to long life: those bereavements of the heart that wound it, and weigh down the spirit; so that the mourner is as one who rests at the door of death, and waits most willingly to enter—and yet it will not open to him. All visible objects were insufficient to afford comfort or consolation to such as these; till the holy quiet found within the cell gave peace to souls thus weary and heavy laden. They had leisure to meditate on God; and fixing his image in their hearts, the void occasioned by time was filled with the things of eternity.

In the cloister, too, the sage, whose learned toils had no earthly praise for their object, and no reward but that with which such sweet labours repay themselves, felt, as he contemplated the emblems of the sacred sufferings before his eyes, that all human

knowledge, in whatever path pursued, has but one desired end—to know Jesus Christ and him crucified for the sins of the whole world. Kings "worn with the cares of state," sometimes came to end their days, and "lay their bones" within these monastic walls, and cast down their crowns at the foot of Him whose diadem was one of thorns. The poor, the abject, the despised, the very beggar who took his alms, and left his benizon at the convent door, as he lay prostrate before the cross, felt how ennobling was the humility of a Christian—a humility that raised him from earth to heaven.

Such, perhaps, is the fair side of the picture, in the earliest and the best state of monachism, before those gross superstitions and frauds—which gradually crept in—produced its ruin in this country; and, but for such crimes, these institutions might, even to this day, have been spared, in a limited degree, as a refuge and a blessing to the old, the learned, the pious, and the friendless.

"Hermits," says Sir Thomas More, "as well as monks, Montesinos, have been useful in their day. Your state of society is not the better because it provides no places of religious retirement for those who desire and need it."

"Certainly not," replies Montesinos, "I consider the dissolution of the religious houses as the greatest evil that accompanied the Reformation."

"Take from such communities," says Sir Thomas More, "their irrevocable vows, their onerous laws, their ascetic practices; cast away their mythology, and with it the frauds and follies connected therewith, and how beneficial would they then be found! What opportunities would they afford to literature,

what aid to devotion, what refuge to affliction, what consolation to humanity."

"And what relief to society," adds Montesinos, "which as it becomes more crowded in its walks, and as education and intelligence are more and more diffused, must, in every succeeding generation, feel more pressingly the want of such institutions!" And after stating the evils to which in Roman Catholic countries nunneries are liable, and shewing that, but for the "weighty advantages" which accompany them, they would not be tolerated even in such lands of superstition, he concludes with this most just observation: "How easily might those advantages be obtained in communities founded upon the principles of our own church, and liable to no such evils*."

Certain it is that a state of seclusion never was, and never will be suited to all tempers and minds. The great evil of monachism was its want of discrimination in this respect. If temporary disgust, some present care, or some worldly interest, had been the cause of consigning a human being to the convent walls, and those circumstances passing away, forgotten or reconciled, he grew tired of his retreat, and would gladly have returned again to take a part more congenial to his natural character in active life, his "irrevocable vows" became to him a chain of adamant, that held him, like Prometheus bound to a rock, whilst discontent, as a vulture, preyed upon his heart. Thus was his retreat a state of slavery, not of profit, or of devotion; and he was as worthless to others as he was miserable to himself;

* See Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society. Vol. i. page 338.

since a large degree of mental ease, of comparative happiness, is necessary to render men useful in society; a despairing can never be an active mind, for a withered tree bears no fruit.

Another evil attending the monastic rule was, that the recluse was more freed than he ought to have been from the numberless minor duties and occupations of daily life that are so salutary even to the most gifted minds; and, to ordinary ones, are as necessary to keep them in health, as exercise is to the body, or sleep to the composure of the spirits. To have the mind always bent on high thoughts, on the invisible world or its mysteries, never can be consistent with the designs of nature; since more than half the business of human life turns on the performance of small matters of necessity, so regular in themselves, that, whilst there is variety enough to prevent satiety, they are sufficiently mechanical in their order and recurrence to become easy in practice: they cost no effort, and give no pain. And there is not a greater sign of a little mind than the affectation of despising little duties.

Dr. Johnson, whose wisdom as a philosopher was, if possible, only exceeded by his worth as a man, considered that one chief cause of there being fewer women who lost their reason than men, arose from their frequent occupation with the needle, a thing to which they could at all times turn, and almost under any circumstances. In this he shewed his correct knowledge of human nature; since minor employments, that call forth just so much exertion of the faculties as may prevent them from wandering or standing still, and that alternate with those requiring a more severe application of the mind, are of the

highest benefit to every age and sex. The advantages of such relaxations may be seen in children; for the dullest boys are seldom those who pursue their sports and pastimes with activity and delight. Indeed, to make a child stupid, there is, perhaps, no surer mode than to deprive him of his hours of play, and of those little toils in its pursuit which he imposes upon himself.

Thus did the idleness of the monastic life, with its ordinary members, prepare the way for many evils: for if a recluse, when he became such, had no pursuit, and few ideas, he was very likely to have those few turned on mischief; since, however a man may be shut out from the world, unless he can shut out the vacancy of seclusion also it will become dangerous to him; and the lurking aptness for evil in his own nature will lead him into folly or to sin; for "slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep," which, in a moral view, too often becomes the sleep of death.

But perhaps the greatest dangers of a state of seclusion were experienced by those who, possessing a vivid imagination, would not confine its exercise to the right objects of faith, but lavished it upon those mysteries of God which are beyond "this visible diurnal sphere." Imagination is like wine, a draught to sweeten life, or to drown reason—all depending on the measure of indulgence. To speak of this high faculty in a figurative manner, her power is regal, and the passions stand as servants around her, in due subjection to her will; but if once she permits them to exceed the bounds of reason, they will hurry her along with them in their wild career; madness or superstition seizing upon her as a slave.

The wanderings, the perversions of the mind, no

doubt produced many of those extravagancies and disorders which have taken place in the worship of that Being who is the life and soul of order; and who shows forth the greatness of His power in his calm but irresistible course. Yet how miserably was the nature of God mistaken by those ascetic devotees who fancied, in the darkness of their credulity, that voluntary misery could be pleasing to Him; and who, in the melancholy, or the madness of their own mood, dwelt on the visions of a distempered imagination, and gave them forth as the immediate revelations of Heaven! To some such causes, as well as to actual fraud, may be attributed those false visions and miracles that disgrace the lives of the Romish saints and martyrs, and render the pages of the monkish chroniclers in many instances not much better than a garden so encumbered with weeds as to make it difficult to separate from them whatever plant is of a useful or a wholesome kind.

But though, during the early ages, it was the general practice to ascribe remarkable events to some supernatural cause, we must not hastily conclude that *all* records of such a nature were fictions.

It was the character of former ages to believe too much; of our own, to believe too little: their vice was that of credulity; ours, of infidelity: for men now are become so wise, at least in their own conceit, that what they cannot understand they will not credit, and what is above reason they deem contrary to it. Yet so little do we really know concerning our own faculties, and of those things which, though before our eyes, we have no power to penetrate, that it should make us cautious how we judge of the ways of God. There are spirits who walk the

air as we do the earth; there are intelligences every where about us that, as winged messengers of God, perform His will, and yet we neither see nor understand them. To say, therefore, that such spirits have not, and cannot, at His command become visible to mortal eyes, or that the spirits of the departed never revisit the earth, is to limit God's power by the measure of our own faculties. All things are instruments of his Providence; and it is not our place to say which he may choose, or which he may reject, to fulfil his own unerring purposes. The dead may appear as they have appeared on earth; and who shall say it cannot be so? How many strong and right impulses sway the mind of him who seeks God, who knocks and it *is* opened to him; that prove themselves, in their results, to be no other than the secret counsels of His will for His servant's good! And though to credit every idle dream in our sleep would be folly or superstition, yet, to say God has never spoken to us even in a dream would be to contradict the evidence of all history, sacred and profane, and to harden the heart against the witness of our own experience; and all for fear of a scoff or a laugh from some one who would be so wise in his generation as to think God governs the world after the manner of men.

But what say the good and the wise, those who are wise because they are humble, and are as little children before their father? "I doubt not," says Addison, "that dreams, though known liars, sometimes speak the truth." And Bishop Bull (who combated superstition, and was the adversary of the learned and eloquent Bossuet) thus writes:—"I am no doter on dreams, yet I verily believe that some

dreams are *monitory*, above the power of fancy, and impressed on us by some superior influence. Nor shall I so value the laughter of sceptics, and the scoffs of Epicureans, as to be ashamed to profess that I myself have had some convincing experiments of such impressions. Now it is no enthusiam; but the best account that can be given of them is, to ascribe these things to the ministry of those invisible instruments of God's Providence that guide and govern our affairs and concerns—the angels of God."

The remarks here ventured arose from my thoughts having been turned on the subject of dreams, by finding how much an attention to them was the characteristic of the times about which I am now to write; and as I considered it was my duty to notice such characteristic, I trust they will not be found entirely misplaced; and that I shall not myself be liable to the charge of superstition, because I am not altogether sceptical on subjects that have so much evidence on their side. I could plead another thing as my apology, and that comes immediately in point; for the foundation of our Abbey is ascribed, according to the Cartulary of Tavistock, to a vision or dream; though it is one of so marvellous and monkish a kind, that I doubt not you will agree with me in thinking it had its origin in the customary practice and credulity of the chroniclers of the age. Be this as it may, after consulting all the authorities I can here command, and some original notes, (and extracts from various writers,) made by Mr. Bray, I shall now proceed to glean from the whole the sum and substance of the following wonderful tale.

I must first observe, however, that Orgar, Earl of

Devon, died A. D. 971, and was interred in the abbey church of Tavistock, where his tomb, and that of his son Ordulph, Malmesbury states, were to be seen in his time. As the abbey was commenced in 861, it should appear that, though the idea of its erection originated with the son, yet as Orgar was then alive, and, indeed, survived him ten years, he was considered, and with good reason too, as its co-founder.

Ordulph was a religious and devout man, and rising one night, as was his custom, he went out of doors to offer up his prayers. There is something so remarkable in this, (since many of the druidical temples, we know, were used as places of worship with the early christians, and on that account were long afterwards held sacred,) that it would almost lead one to suspect that some vestige of this nature was the favorite resort of Ordulph for the purposes of his midnight devotion. Whilst engaged in the act of prayer, he beheld in a vision a glory that seemed to reach from earth to heaven, surpassing the brilliancy of the sun; and he thought on the goodness of God, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and who led forth the children of Israel by day with the pillar of the cloud, and by night with that of fire. Struck with awe at this miraculous appearance, Ordulph again retired to rest, and after shedding many tears, sleep closed his eyes, and he beheld in a dream a "shadow like an angel," whose countenance was of exceeding brightness, who accosted him with the words—*Ne timeas, vir Deo dilecte.* The Spirit then commanded him to rise and erect an oratory on the place where he had seen the glory, and where he should find four rods fixed at right angles, to the

honour of the four evangelists, who had, as on a four-wheeled chariot, spread the word of the gospels throughout the world. On the fulfilment of this command, the angelic messenger promised him the forgiveness of his sins.

Starting from sleep, Ordulph related the vision to his wife; who affirmed that she had seen the like; and after saying his prayers devoutly on his knees, he once more composed himself to rest. But the same angelic figure appeared to each a second time, and rebuked the husband for his delay; telling him that to obey was better than sacrifice. And the same visitation being a third time repeated on the same night, Ordulph no longer hesitated. Rising, therefore, early in the morning, and reverently making the sign of the cross, he entered a neighbouring wood, where he found the precise spot that had been revealed to him by the four rods. It was pleasant, open, and every way suited for the purpose; and there he soon raised an oratory, on the western side of which he afterwards founded a very magnificent monastery to the honour of Mary the mother of God, and St. Rumon, and so large as to receive a thousand men. To this he added several other houses for the service of the monks, and at length he richly endowed it*. This noble abbey completed, Prince, the author of the 'Worthies of Devon,' says, "he filled it with Augustine friars, afterwards, from their *habit*, called *black* monks." In this, as we

* With the manors of Tavistock, Midleton (now Milton), Hatherleigh, Borington, Leghe, Dunethem, Chuvelin, Linkinhorn; and his wife with the manors of Hame, Werelgete, Orlege, Auri, Rame, Savyoke, Pannaston, Tornbire, Colbroke, Lege Wesithetun, and Clymesland.

shall presently see, he must confound the Augustines who first inhabited it, with the Benedictines that soon after took their place; since in the earliest times, the former order were distinguished by *white* habits, though a black mantle was long after allowed to them; whereas the Benedictines, from their very foundation, were clad entirely in *black*. There is an old satiric poem extant, a translation of which I have seen, of a very remote age; in which the writer, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten, having quarrelled with the Augustine friars, compares their hypocritical sanctity—for so he styles it—to their *dress*, and calls them "*whited walls*." It was my intention to give the passage: but having neglected to make the extract when I read the poem, I have since vainly endeavoured to find it.

Ordulph is represented to have been of gigantic stature, and prodigious strength. Travelling towards Exeter, with King Edward the Confessor, to whom he was related, when they came to the gates of the city they found them locked and barred, and the porter, knowing nothing of their coming, was absent. Upon which Ordulph, leaping off his horse, took the bars in his hands, and with great apparent ease broke them in pieces, at the same time pulling out part of the wall. Not content with this, he gave a second proof of his strength; for, breaking the hinges with his foot, he laid the gates open. Whilst those who witnessed this extraordinary feat could not suppress their admiration, the King, pretending to underrate his prowess, declared it must have been done by the sole power of the devil, and not by the strength of man. However wonderful this story may appear, it is not more so than what Malmesbury

relates of him in another particular—that he was of such gigantic stature, that for his amusement he would often bestride a river, near his residence, of ten feet broad; and with his knife would chop off the heads of such wild animals as were brought to him, and so cast them into the stream.

But notwithstanding the superiority of his strength and stature, Ordulph died in the flower of his age. He gave orders to be buried at his abbey, at Herton, in Dorsetshire; but was interred in or near the abbey church of Tavistock, where a mausoleum or tomb, of vast dimensions, was erected to his memory, which is represented to have been visited as a wonder.

Prince, in his 'Worthies of Devon,' says—"There is nothing now remaining of it but an arch, where, as tradition testifies, this mighty tomb stood *.

An arch still remains in tolerable preservation on the site of what, there is every reason to believe, had been part of the abbey church. It bears evidently the appearance of a shrine, or sepulchral monument; consisting of a rich and highly relieved moulding,

* "Browne Willis tells us, that in his time, the sepulchral effigies of this Saxon giant, of great length, were still preserved by lying under an arch in the north side of the cloisters of the abbey church. This identical arch, as I apprehend, still remains a solitary remnant of the immediate appendages of the abbey church. The architecture of this recess is of the time of Henry III. And as there is no example extant which can lead us to conclude that sepulchral figures were placed over tombs in the middle ages, till the twelfth century, and as it was usual to re-edify and remodel the monuments of saints and remarkable persons (of which custom the shrine of Edward the Confessor, now in Westminster Abbey, is a prominent example), Ordulph's tomb, perhaps, underwent a renovation about this period, and was supplied with a sepulchral effigy."—Notices of Tavistock and its Abbey, by A. J. Kempe, F.S.A.

supported by three short pillars at either extremity. It is pointed at the top but spreading, and being closed, or built so as to form part of a wall, is crossed just above the capitals of the columns by a range of small arches, supported also themselves by a row of little pillars on a kind of plinth.

Though Mr. Bray is rather inclined to consider it as the tomb of Ordulph, it is generally denominated Childe's tomb. And as the story of this latter person, if not true, is at least curious, I shall not scruple to introduce it here.

Having no children of his own, and being the last of his house, which was of ancient standing in the county, Childe of Plymstock is said to have made a will, wherein he devised his lands to that church in which he should happen to be buried. Some time after, whilst recreating himself with hunting in the forest of Dartmoor, he lost both his way and his company, during an inclement season, in a very deep snow. Being surrounded by desolation, and seeing no possible means of escape, he began to think what was to be done to keep life and soul together; and as in his day the acts and miraculous adventures of the clergy and the saints were much talked of, it is not impossible he might have called to mind one recorded of Elsinus, the Saxon Bishop of Worcester, when crossing the Alps to receive his pall from the hands of the Pope. Be this as it may, he determined to take up the same kind of lodging the saint and bishop was said to have done; and so killing his horse, and emboweling him on the spot, old Childe crept into the body for the purpose of procuring a little warmth in his distress. But the expedient had not saved a saint, how then could it

be expected to preserve a sinner? Finding his last hour approach, Childe, in order to confirm his will, took some of his own blood, (though one would have thought it was more likely to have been that of his horse,) and made the following distich in writing; though how he procured pen or paper to do so this wonderful record has forgotten to tell:

"He that finds and brings me to my tomb,
My land of Plymstock shall be his doom."*

Now whatever modern critics may think of the rhyme, it soon appeared that the monks of Tavistock found there was reason in it; and good reason, too, that they should constitute themselves the heirs of old Childe; for soon hearing that he was frozen to death somewhere near Crockern-tor, they set their wits and hands to work to give him as speedily as possible an honorable sepulchre.

But as the heirship was left thus vague and open to competition, there were others who thought themselves quite as much, if not more, entitled to succeed than the friars; and these were the good people of Plymstock, in whose parish the lands in question had their standing; and though not invited to the funeral, yet, out of respect to the old gentleman, or more probably to his acres, they not only determined to invite themselves, but also to try how far club-law might settle the heirship in their favour; and

* Prince says, in the 'Worthies,' "now something in confirmation hereof I find, that there is a place in the forest of Dartmoor, near Crockern-tor, which is still called Childe of Plymstock's tomb; whereon, we are informed, these verses were engraven, and heretofore seen, though not now:

"'They first that find, and bring me to my grave,
My lands, which are at Plymstock, they shall have.'"

so taking their post at a certain bridge over which they conceived the corpse must of necessity be carried, they came to the resolution to wrest the body out of the hands of the holy men by force, if no better settlement of the matter could be effected.

The friars, however, were men of peace, and had no mind, may be, to take up any weapon sharper than their wits; since, as Dr. Fuller says, when speaking of this adventure, "they must rise betimes, or rather not go to bed at all, that will overreach the monks in matters of profit;" for these cunning brothers, apprehensive of losing their precious reliques, cast a slight bridge over the river at another place, and thus, crossing with the corpse, they left the men of Plymstock the privilege of becoming, very sincerely, the chief mourners, whilst they interred old Childe in their own abbey church, and, according to his last will, took possession of his lands.

It is certain that the Abbot of Tavistock enjoyed considerable property at Plymstock, which is now in the possession of the Duke of Bedford; and Fuller states that, in memory of this successful stratagem on the part of the monks, the bridge raised in or near the spot in Tavistock bears the name of *Guile*-bridge to the present day. It is, however, now more commonly known by the name of the Abbey-bridge. Childe is supposed to have lived in the reign of Edward the Third.

The abbey, with its church, was dedicated to St. Mary the holy Virgin, and St. Rumon; the parish church, to St. Eustachius. The arms of the abbey were gules, two crosiers saltire ways between two martlets or, in a chief argent three mullets sable. The

arms of Orgar were, according to one authority, Verrey B. and Arg. in chief Or, two mullets Gul. According to another, Verey B. and arg. in chief arg. three mullets Sable. This latter coat, impaled with the arms of the Abbey of Tavistock, was, in the time of Prince, painted in a glass window of the dining-room at the Bear Inn, Exeter. Though little of a herald, I am thus particular, as, in the groined ceiling to the porch of what was formerly the abbot's hall (says Mr. Bray, from whose papers I have gleaned the above particulars) the latter arms, surrounded with a wreath, are still discernible, cut in granite, and forming one of the key-stones; while, on the other, in a lozenge, is represented a dove with a cross on its breast.

Respecting St. Rumon, to whom, with the Virgin, the abbey church was dedicated, I find the following notice in my brother, Alfred Kempe's, account before mentioned.

"Leland found a MS. Life of Rumon in Tavistock Abbey at the time of the suppression of monasteries. He appears by this work to have been one of many saints who emigrated from Ireland into Cornwall in the fifth or sixth century, for the purpose of enjoying the deepest seclusion, and to have erected for himself an oratory in what the author terms a Nemæan forest, formerly a most frequented haunt of wild beasts. This, according to the MS., was at Falmouth, where he died and was buried; but the fame of his sanctity still surviving, Ordulph, on completing the monastery at Tavistock, was induced to remove his bones from their resting-place, and to enshrine them in the abbey church, where they be-

came an object of ignorant devotion. Malmesbury seems to lament that the miracles of Rumon, in common with those of many other saints, owing to the violent hostility of subsequent times, remained unrecorded. No doubt this hiatus was amply supplied in the volume found by Leland, and the labours of him who perhaps was really a zealous and fearless propagator of Christianity in the primitive times, were converted into a series of ascetic mortifications, degrading to reason, and worse than useless to society, while his sanctity became attested by the detail of miracles more absurd than the wildest of the Arabian Tales. Of the reputed saints, however, many were really such in their day; heroic soldiers, like St. Paul, of Christ's Church militant on earth, in perils and persecutions; but the purity of their doctrines becoming obscured during temporal convulsions, the monks issued from their *scriptoria* new versions of their lives, which suited their own purposes for the time, but have had the effect in these enlightened days of clouding the memory of holy men with much of doubt and incredulity."

The Abbey of Tavistock being thus finished, dedicated, and endowed in the year 981, King Ethelred, the son of Elfrida, confirmed and granted to it many considerable privileges, making it free from all secular services excepting rate for military expeditions, and the repair of bridges and castles. "In the preamble to this instrument he laments that certain persons, stained with infidelity, had been allowed, without his consent (he being, as it might be said, in an infant and powerless state, not more than twenty years of age), to drive the monks of Tavi-

stock from their sacred places and possessions. This stain of infidelity was, I apprehend, nothing more than a disbelief in the sanctity of monachism, and the expulsion of the monks from church benefices, in which they were replaced by the much more deserving secular clergy." Such are my brother's remarks; but we shall hereafter see that, in all probability, the expulsion thus alluded to by Ethelred had reference to the Augustine friars, who were so soon turned out of the very abbey in which they had been placed by Orgar and Ordulph. What I have to say on the subject must, however, be reserved for another letter.

Ethelred's charter (witnessed by his mother, Queen Elfrida, and the Archbishop of Canterbury) empowered our Tavistock monks to choose their own abbot, and contained the following severe penalty on any one who should presume to alienate any part of the privileges thus granted and confirmed.

"If any seduced with the madness of covetousness shall presume to infringe this our munificence, let him be driven from the communion of Christ's Church, and from any participation of the body and blood of the Son of God; let him stand at last, with the traitor Judas on the left hand; and, unless he repents and makes satisfaction, let the vile apostate never be forgiven, either in this life, or in that to come; but let him be thrust down, with Ananias and Sapphira, to the bottom of hell, where let him be tormented for ever. Amen."

Almer, a Saxon, was chosen the first abbot; and I shall presently give a list of all the abbots, down to the Reformation. Something must now be said

of the order of monks who were appointed to the abbey about the time that Ethelred granted his charter; but having extended this much beyond the limits of an ordinary letter, I will not at present add more than that

I am, my dear Sir,

With every feeling of respectful esteem,

Most faithfully and truly yours,

A. E. BRAY.

LETTER XXIV.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

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CONTENTS.—Dunstan living at the time of building the Abbey—Algarus removed from the See of Crediton—Dunstan's views respecting the Benedictines—His power and craft—Orgar in his office of Earl must have been a coadjutor of Algarus in the Shiregemot Court—Some conjectures respecting the removal of Algarus—On what circumstances founded—The Benedictines—Their great learning—Literature benefited by them—The subject further considered—Learning fearfully assailed—Its preservation and revival—Liturgies—The Bible—Benedictines, their great works—Brief account of St. Benedict their founder—Interview between him and Tortila, king of the Goths—His prophecy fulfilled—A venerable Benedictine known to the writer abroad—His amiable character—Demolition of Monasteries a cause of unceasing regret—The Cross; its beauty in form—The good influence arising from its being an object of sight—Crosses frequently met with in the West—Thoughts and feelings suggested by the subject—The imposing nature of Abbeys and Monastic buildings—Their moral grandeur—Blind zeal led to their destruction—Reformation disgracefully carried on though useful in its general aim—Abbey walls of Tavistock—Their beautiful situation—St. John's; the hermitage of the olden time—Reflections suggested by an evening walk on the banks of the Tavy under these venerable walls.

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Vicarage, Tavistock, August 1st, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT is not unworthy observation that, about the time of the building of Tavistock Abbey, Dunstan, that crafty churchman, of miracle-lying memory, by his exertions removed Algarus from the see of Crediton (after he had held it ten years) to make way for Alfodus, a friend of his own, who there

remained bishop during seventeen years, when he died. What motive could have prompted Dunstan to desire the removal of Algarus is not ascertained; but it may, I think, be inferred with a nearer approach to certainty than generally accompanies conjecture.

The power which that ambitious primate had acquired over the mind of the licentious Edgar is too well known to need much notice here; the king was, in fact, in all ecclesiastical matters, no more than an instrument to forward the artful and grasping designs of Dunstan. Assured of royal countenance, he soon put in execution those tyrannical schemes he had so long formed to establish celibacy as a law with the clergy, to expel or convert them into monks, and to render those monks Benedictines: a rule that was dependent on himself, and would help to carry on his plans throughout the kingdom. Dunstan, moreover, had been the first Abbot of Glastonbury, a monastery built, endowed, and filled by him with Benedictines; an order of which Fuller (in the spirit of pleasantry he so constantly mingles with the most excellent sense) says, "they now began to swarm in England, more than maggots in a hot May, so incredible was their increase."

No sooner had Edgar succeeded to the throne of his unfortunate brother Edwy, than the primate procured Oswald and Ethelwald to be promoted to the sees of Worcester and Winchester, as ecclesiastics avowedly devoted to the grand object of forwarding by every means the advancement of the Benedictine rule; and he hesitated not to remove or persecute any of the clergy who offered the least resistance to

his will. When we recollect these things, we need not look far to find a very probable motive for the removal of Algarus from the see of Crediton. Nor can I help fancying that, by inference, at least, this motive may be yet further developed, and that it was not other than connected with the order of monks in our abbey.

Orgar, Earl of Devon, in the very nature of his office, could not but be in some measure acquainted with Algarus; since, as Bishop of Crediton, he must have taken his seat with the earl of the county in the Shiregemot Court. Now, at the time Orgar contemplated building and endowing his abbey on the banks of the Tavy, might he not have consulted with Algarus, respecting the *order* of monks he should place in it? For if Prince be correct in his statement (and there is no reason to think he was otherwise, as he chiefly followed that excellent antiquary Risdon) our abbey was at *first* peopled with *Augustine* friars*: though, according to Dugdale, such order could not have been then of long continuance; for Tavistock Abbey was founded in 961, and Dugdale cites a charter of the reign of Ethelbert, dated 981, giving the monks therein power to choose their own abbot, in which they are expressly stated to be of the *Benedictine* rule. The same learned writer tells us, that Edgar in 964 made it his boast that he had endowed not less than forty-seven monasteries of that order in his king-

* The Augustine order seems to have been a favourite one with the family of the Earl of Devon; for his daughter, Queen Elfrida, peopled her convents of Warwelle and Amblesbury with Augustine Nuns.

dom. Our abbey, it will be recollected, was commenced three years before this; and was endowed by Orgar, *not* by Edgar.

When we consider the boast on the part of the king, we see how friendly he was to the monks whom Fuller compares to the "maggots in a hot May." And when we also consider Dunstan's determination to have all the monks Benedictines, the Augustine friars of Tavistock were tolerably sure of being turned out. And the removal of Algarus (in whose diocese they were) by the interference of Dunstan, leads me to suspect that the bishop was, in some way or other, an obstacle to this change of the order; or he might at first have prevailed with Orgar to make choice of the Augustines, which suited not with the plans and intrigues of Dunstan; for we cannot doubt that with his views, an abbey endowed on so large a scale as Tavistock (to hold a thousand men) and by so great a benefactor as Orgar, must have been a foundation worth intriguing for on the part of the primate, who sought to extend his own power by peopling, if it were possible, every monastery with those Benedictines who were so entirely subservient to his will*.

* The dislike which Queen Elfrida, and her son Ethelred, entertained for Dunstan is well known; and so far had it extended that, at one time, there was the queen's party, and the archbishop's, in the state. "Elfrida," (says Turner in his history of the Anglo Saxons,) "was as ambitious as Dunstan, and therefore became his rival. She joined the party of the clergy, and endeavoured to bias the minds of the great in favour of her son Ethelred." This was *before* he succeeded to the throne by her murder of Edward the Martyr. It is therefore the more probable that Ethelred's complaint, in the preamble of his charter, about the monks being turned out of their possessions in Tavisock Abbey, referred to the *previous* removal

His character renders these conjectures (and they are only offered as conjectures) the more likely; since, with the exception of Wolsey, there is not, perhaps, in the ecclesiastical history of this country, so deeply designing, or so far-sighted a prelate as Dunstan. Becket, to borrow your own words (in the 'Book of the Church'), had a "daring spirit, a fiery temper, and a haughty heart," loved power, and pursued his ends by means sufficiently proud and overbearing. But the high tone with which he maintained the dignity of the priesthood, as, with his crosier in his hand, he met Henry face to face, and presenting before him that pastoral emblem of a servant of the good shepherd—as arms placed in his hands by God himself, to command even the respect of kings—inspires a feeling of admiration which true magnanimity will always awaken in a generous breast; and was far different from the mean compliances with the king's vices, the frauds and the hypocrisy of Dunstan. Those mean compliances were apparent when he enjoined on Edgar a mock penance for the flagrantly immoral actions of his life: since his penances were no weightier than that the king was not to wear his crown for a certain space of time, and was to fast during certain days. And most truly did he turn even the king's sins to his own profit, when above all other things he recommended that the royal penitent, as an atonement for them, should persecute the married clergy might and main, expel them, and

of the *Augustine* friars. Some years after this event, the Abbey being thus finished and endowed, King Ethelred, grandson of the founder, confirmed and granted to it many considerable privileges, making it free from all secular services, those before named excepted.

set up the Benedictine rule throughout the land. Assuredly the acts of Dunstan witness for him that his intercourse with the devil was no fiction, though it may be questioned if it were not in a more friendly way than that of taking him by the nose.

However, to the praise of the Benedictines be it spoken, their order, from the earliest times to the latest, was favourable to learning. And as any history of our abbey would be very imperfect did it not give some account of the rule which prevailed in it for so many centuries, instead of offering any excuses for here introducing it, I should have to apologize did I omit it: more especially as it will be found, in the sequel, that our Tavistock monks have the honour of being connected with the art of printing in its earliest age; and, indeed, as Benedictine brothers, may be classed with those who assisted in the preservation and revival of letters.

Though foreign wars have occasionally been the means of spreading literature, or of bringing it with profit home, yet nothing, it is universally allowed, is so injurious to its immediate interests, as the revolutions and civil brawls of political states. Very different from the first position, however, was the invasion of Italy; when Rome being sacked by the Goths, in the time of Honorius, and the whole country subsequently conquered by Odoacer, completed the ruin of that celebrated empire, second only to Greece as the fertile mother of genius and the nursery of learning. To those who wish to see letters flourish in their own day, it is at all times grievous to observe the public mind turned wholly on political opposition. A contest of this sort may sometimes begin with judgment, but it is sure to

degenerate into passion; and the frenzy or malice of party spirit gives birth to those feelings of littleness, which harden the mind, or render it indifferent to the delightful relaxations and the kindly fruits of letters.

Literature also teaches men to be reasonable, and to look to experience for instruction. When properly pursued, it is the great school of humility; since the student learns to little advantage, if he learns not his own insufficiency, and after all he acquires, sees not how much remains beyond the span of his own limited existence, and that perfect knowledge is with God alone. These are truths which men bent on the frenzy of insurrectionary passions will never admit; since their standard of all knowledge of right and wrong is their own opinion. A wise man and a true christian, on the contrary, founds his politics on the laws of God, as well as on the established laws of his country; and both teach submission and obedience. These I am aware are opinions of what is now called the "Old school," they suit not with the spirit of the new, and are, as Shakspeare so feelingly expresses it, like

"Unregarded age, in corners thrown."

Learning, though fearfully assailed, and at last overthrown, in the empire of the West, was saved from total extinction by the followers of the Christian Church. It has been well remarked by an intelligent but anonymous writer on the subject of its decay, that whilst a "gothic tempest" would have swept from Europe the arts and the written wisdom of antiquity, one thing contributed to save them from total destruction, though that was in itself a bad

thing—"superstition." For the barbarous hordes of the North entertained so great a dread of their idolatrous gods, that it inspired them with a fear and deference for their priesthood; and this feeling, in some measure, accompanied them even into foreign countries, and was now and then evinced towards the ministers of a foreign religion; so that the monastery (and would that the Danes had done the same in England at a subsequent period!) was sometimes spared, when palaces were sacked and committed to the flames.

In the primitive ages of Christianity, learning was alone cultivated by the Fathers of the Church; and the writings of such men as St. Chryostom, Augustine, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyprian, and others, independent of the great truths they inculcate, were of that feeling and poetic order of eloquence, that ranks them next to the prophets and the apostles, and shows that the writers were filled with a large portion of the Holy Spirit, so abundantly poured forth in the early ages of the Church. Their disciples followed in their path; so that whilst the barbarities of the northern conquerors had spread around a darkness which, to the human soul, was as "thick night," light was only to be found in the cell of the christian scholar; whose lonely lamp, as it glimmered on the shores of some placid sea, was a guiding star to the weary and persecuted of the Church, where religion and learning, those twins of peace and love, reposed, like the dove of David, far away from the stormy winds and the tempest.

The earliest liturgies were composed in Greek and Latin, and to the fathers are we indebted for the preservation of those noble languages; the latter

hereafter to become, as we have seen, the medium of communication with the learned of Europe: thus affording them a common means of exchanging the benefits of science and knowledge, that formed, though at a distance and unseen by each other, a bond of friendship arising from sympathy of feeling and similarity of pursuit—a union which none but noble minds can truly enjoy; since it is one disinterested, independent of the circumstances of life, or the changes of fortune, and looks for its continuance in a world beyond the grave.

Valuable as were the writings of the ancients, we are above all, however, indebted to the Bible for the preservation and the revival of learning. Independent of its being the Book of Life, it is of such transcendent beauty, in almost every species of composition, that, had every other book been destroyed, it would of itself have been sufficient to have taught wisdom to empires, to give law to governments, and to teach both morals and manners to the whole world. The Bible was to the early Christians, as the ark of God had been to the Jews of old, the depository of the covenant: it went forth with them into all nations and languages: it became their strength in the hour of victory, and their hope under the severest trials and persecutions of their faith. It was the only book over which sin and death could have no power.

That not only the sacred writings, but such of the classics as have come down to us, were preserved in the monasteries, is a fact so universally known, that nothing more than here to notice it need be said upon the subject. The Benedictines, from the seventh to the last century, were employed in those

labours that have made the learned of all times their debtors. And amongst many excellent works, one of the most valuable sent by them into the world in modern days, is an edition of St. Chrysostom, edited by Montfaucon, with the assistance of other members of the same community. And though, unhappily, the monastic institutions were swept away, instead of being reformed, with the Church, it would be well if the learned who reside in our colleges in one thing followed the example of the Benedictines. With the leisure, the advantages they possess in every way, did they unite together and assist each other in the task, they might, by such joint labours, afford the literary world at large most valuable editions not only of the classics, but of the Fathers, and of every inestimable work of antiquity.

The Benedictine order had its origin with Benedict, an Italian, who, about the end of the fifth century, first attracted notice on account of his talents and his worth. He is generally considered to have been the son of a peasant, though some writers have affirmed that his father was of a noble house. Be this as it may, his zeal for religion and good morals proved that he was possessed of that true nobility of mind which, as an old writer says, "hath its patent from God himself, and needeth no earthly addition." Benedict, on conversing with young men of his own age, felt so shocked at observing the licentiousness of their manners, that he retired from the world, and shut himself up in a cavern where no one, saving an old monk, knew of his retreat. At length he was induced to converse with the monks belonging to the community of his friend; and so much were they edified by listening to his devout discourses, that they

spread his fame far and near; and, after a while, he was requested to leave his cave and become superior of a monastery in the neighbourhood.

Sacrificing his love of solitude for the hope of being useful to others, Benedict accepted the office, but resolved, should he be disappointed in his expectations, that the old cavern should once more become his home. The monks, over whom he now presided in their religious exercises, fell far short of the ideas he had formed of devotional perfection; he liked not their manners, and they liked not his discipline, and so they speedily parted on less happy terms than they had met. According to those chroniclers who celebrated the lives of the saints, the power of working miracles was now added to all his other extraordinary endowments; and this power drew around him a multitude of followers and disciples. It is to be supposed they supplied him amply with this world's goods; since, unless he did it by miracle, Benedict erected, by his own means, many monasteries, and placed in them persons who were more willing than the monks had been to follow his rule; and even some of the nobles brought to him their children, that they might receive such an education as he should direct.

Imitating the manner of life practised by the holy apostles, Benedict travelled into several kingdoms, preaching the gospel, and confirming the truth of its doctrine by many marvellous works. In the country of the Samnites he overthrew the altar of Apollo, destroyed the statue of that god, cut down his grove, and erected an oratory in the place where the heathen temple had stood; but so numerous were the persons who wished to devote themselves to his way

of life, that he found it necessary to turn his oratory into a monastery, of which he now became the chief, and thus established, on a more permanent footing, that rigid order which ever after bore his name.

Benedict was not the only saint of his family; his sister, to whom he was exceedingly attached, being no less celebrated for piety than himself. She was a nun, and one day only in the year did these near relatives indulge themselves with any pleasure so allied to earthly feelings as that of the interchange of fraternal affection. During an interview of this description, whilst Benedict, attended by his disciples, was about to retire, after having preached and prayed from his cell, his sister threw herself on her knees before him, and begged him to tarry another day; but her brother told her that the rule of his order did not allow him to pass one night beyond the walls of the monastery of which he was the chief. She then, in a fit of passionate sorrow, supplicated God to grant her patience and resignation, as she felt assured that she should never more behold her most beloved friend. Benedict endeavoured to console her; and though he refused compliance with her request, a sudden and violent storm which ensued caused some delay in his departure; at last he went. Great, however, was his grief when, soon after his return to the monastery, he received the information that his sister was dead, so speedily had her own prediction been fulfilled. He caused her body to be removed to the tomb that he had prepared for himself, in order that his ashes might hereafter mingle with hers in the same grave.

Another striking story is recorded of Benedict respecting his interview with the fierce Totila, King

of the Goths. So great was the reputation of the saint, that the barbarian prince entertained a wish to see him, and the more so as he understood that he possessed the gift of prophecy, and hoped to learn from him some intelligence of his future destiny. The king was struck with awe on beholding the venerable aspect of the saint, and he who had never before humbled himself in the presence of mortal fell at the feet of the recluse, who had nothing about him to excite terror excepting that air of authority with which, as a prophet of God, he looked upon the king and reproached him for his cruel victories. Totila, alarmed but not converted, struggled with feelings so new to him and so embarrassing; and determining, let what would be the event, he would inquire of this man of God his future fate, received, in reply to those inquiries, the following brief prediction: "You will enter Rome; you will pass the sea; nine years a crown is yours, but the tenth that crown shall be given to death." This warning was said to be strictly fulfilled, for Totila died in the tenth year after he had entered the city of Rome. Many are the legends told of St. Benedict. No doubt he was a remarkable person; and the great object, both of his rule and of his life, was to bring into a more moral government the then existing orders of monachism. He had also the good sense to recommend the cultivation of letters to all who devoted themselves to religious retirement. Such was the man who founded the order of the Benedictines.

All monasteries where his rule was professed in former times preserved some record of his life, or of his miracles. If my memory serves me truly, I

understood from a venerable Benedictine, nearly eighty years old, with whom, some years since, I was acquainted at St. Omer's (and who still fondly lingered about the old walls of that abbey of which he had once been a learned, and, I doubt not, a worthy brother), that before the Revolution a splendid illuminated manuscript, of a very early date, containing the life of St. Benedict, had been there preserved. It was lost, or destroyed, when the mob, like so many demoniacs, broke into the noble abbey, and made that havoc which reduced it to the ruinous state in which it appeared when I passed through its melancholy aisles, under the guidance of this aged and devout man, and heard him tell the sad story of its fall. I have never forgotten the poor Benedictine; his unaffected piety; his meek and polished manners; the deep expression of his feelings, and his entire resignation to the will of God, in whose bosom, I doubt not, he is now at rest.

I never can think of the demolition of monasteries and abbeys, and look upon the ruins of our own at Tavistock, without feelings of the most poignant regret. Even the sight of a broken or of an overturned cross gives me pain: the cross! the most beautiful of all simple forms; the most harmless emblem of a Christian people. When viewed with the eye of contemplation, it reminds us of that tree of shame which became to all the world, by the sacrifice of Him who died upon it, as the tree of life and immortality. Would that every church had retained its cross to this day! there would have been no danger that, in Protestant societies, any should fall down and worship the wood or stone of which the emblem was composed. But the mere sight of it, with feeling

persons, must have touched the heart, and some pious thought, some tender recollection would have arisen. And still, in the baptism of our own reformed church, the child on being purified by that holy mystery from original sin, on being made a "faithful soldier of Christ," is signed with "the sign of the cross" upon his brow, and becomes a partaker of the benefits purchased for him by the Redeemer of the world.

In this neighbourhood we often meet in our walks and rides, in many a solitary spot, a rude and ancient cross; some so ancient that we are inclined to consider them as having been set up by the earliest converts to Christianity in this part of England. When we meet with a vestige of this description in the vast desolation of Dartmoor, or in the midst of the rural scenes of wood and water that abound in Devon, near the village or the antique church, how many delightful thoughts and feelings arise in the breast of him who views it in its relation to past times and holy men! Yes—those who reverence antiquity, who love knowledge as the friend of all that is noble and good—of all that makes life pleasant, and time as a field that, if carefully cultivated, will find its harvest in eternity, will look with an eye of deep interest on such venerable records of the past: even the rudest emblem of the cross will not be met with in vain.

These things may excite a smile of contempt in the heartless followers of modern fashion and innovation. But there are feelings, in better minds, that will not bear exposure to the common eye, that find no sympathy with the vulgar in station, or the vulgar in soul; that shrink from the censure of cold

hearts and busy tongues. All those generous sentiments that arise from the poetry of nature, from high-raised thoughts,

"Not of earth only, but of highest heaven,"

are of this kind; and they are more peculiarly the property of the meditative and the good, the "lowly wise," who delight to connect "all seasons and their change," all "outward and visible signs," with that "inward grace," which forms the moral government of the spirit. For such minds there is a full-spread book in the creation of God, and in the arts of man; for such the most solitary depths have a voice that utters wisdom. The wide immensity of heaven; the multitude of countless stars; the clouds that roll before them in their immeasurable travel, that "drop fatness" on the earth, as manna dropped on the desert to sustain the chosen of Israel; the wintry torrent, or the summer brook, each affords its blessing and their lesson to him who can estimate them, as he strays through pathless woods, or the green fields, where the birds that cater not for themselves find a table spread on every bush, where the young ravens seek their food from God. These are pleasures that ask no cost, that require no sacrifice, that cause no remorse, for they have their source in simplicity and in truth. They come to us under a thousand forms, and in a thousand ways. The waves as they break on some distant shore, the shadows of the forest, or the melancholy cadence of the wind, have each a story that the feeling mind delights to hear and to repeat.

Nor less are the pleasures that result from a contemplation of antiquity. The solemn ruins of the feudal castle, the mouldering Abbey, or the ancient

cross, grey with its lichen and its moss, they too have a tongue! How many images of the past do these recall! We think, as we look upon that cross, of the ages that have rolled on since it was there planted by some one now unknown to fame, but whose name, though blotted from the records of time, is enrolled in the book of life. We think of feudal tyrants and stormy times, of fanaticism and rebellion, that have each in turn risen to despise those precepts, and to shake that faith taught by Him who perished on a thing like this! Yet how vain is man when he strives with the Almighty! God has said that the word of his Son is anchored on the rock of ages, and that it shall endure till all nations bow to Him; till all enemies, and death the last, shall be subdued by him; and his law is still great, still spreading to the most distant people of the earth, as that light which encompasses the whole.

What depths of feeling lie hidden in the human breast! What strong traces of the Divinity are fixed in that heart on which is written, as on the bells of the horses' bridles, "Holiness unto the Lord." With those thus favoured by the grace of God, it is a duty replete with delight, it is their best service, and their best reward, to find in all things somewhat of good, somewhat that speaks to them of their Creator. And the works of man, in his finest or his rudest arts, as they are the result of that mind which emanates from the Deity, have likewise an immediate reference to his providence and his power. And never were the arts more nobly employed than by our forefathers, when they raised those beautiful piles, our cathedrals, our churches, our universities, and our Abbeys, to the honour of that religion which God had given to man as

the chief blessing, the chief distinction and glory of his kind, that he should not be as the beasts which perish.

It is lamentable to think how these majestic edifices fell before the blind zeal, the ill-directed means —however desirable the end—of the Reformation. "Never was there a good work so wickedly effected as the Reformation in England. It is at once our chief blessing and our foulest reproach *." A second havoc among ecclesiastical edifices, and scarcely less destructive than the first, arose from the fury of the fanatics, and the miserable sectaries of the time of Charles I. The great enemy of the church, the Prince of darkness himself, never will be at rest in his attempts against it; and whether his agents appear in the shape of infidels, of fanatics, or of merciless reformers, it is the same spirit that actuates them all, for all are rebels against the holiness of God, in his most holy church.

Well would it have been with those who conducted the great Reformation had they been content to repair rather than to overturn. And how good it is to preserve temper in all things may be learned from the example of St. Paul, who, when he saw the altar dedicated by the Greeks to the "Unknown God,' did not overthrow it, but Him whom they ignorantly worshipped did he truly teach them to understand; thus showing that a heathen altar, from which the false fires of idolatry had arisen, was capable of becoming, as the altar of Abraham, a place of sacrifice to the Father of truth.

How often, as I have wandered under the Abbey walls, that now form the boundary of our own garden, and looked on the romantic and beautiful scene that was before me, have I fancied I could see it, animated

* Moral and Political Essays, vol. i. page 98.

with human beings, as it must have appeared in other times. These walls were spared during the general destruction; their massiveness and the roughness of their stone were not improbably their protection. They are even now nearly perfect; and in the quarter towards the Abbey bridge appear lofty and battlemented. A tower called the Still-house, in one part stands forward and breaks the uniformity of the long line of wall, so beautifully hung with ivy. A raised causeway lies between these walls and the river, and affords a walk so delightful, that it may truly be termed the Abbey terrace. It is of considerable extent.

Immediately below this causeway flows the rapid Tavy over vast masses of rock that here and there divide the current of the waters, and form them into many picturesque and low falls, white and dazzling with foam. On the opposite hill, beautifully diversified by trees, some of which droop their branches into the passing waters, once stood a cell, the Hermitage of St. John. Of this no memorial is now left, excepting a spring of the purest kind, and the spot is still called by its ancient name; no doubt this was the sacred fountain dedicated to John the Baptist. There is a record, preserved with the parish documents, consisting of an old inventory of the treasury of Tavistock church, in which it appears that a hermit left his silver crucifix, inclosing a piece of the true cross, to our church. In all probability the recluse who made this bequest was the hermit of St. John.

As you have already read of *the Walk* (as it is called) under our Abbey walls, in Fitz-ford, I do not here enter upon more minute particulars, lest it should come to you as a tale twice told. I shall only, therefore, add, that looking to the east, the Guile bridge,

and the distant heights of Dartmoor, intersected by some trees that grow at the foot of the hill beyond the bridge, close a scene of beauty seldom found so near a populous town in any part of England. As the walls I have mentioned formed the boundary of the Abbot's garden, and there was, and yet remains, a portal which stands near the Still-house, opening upon *the Walk*, I am disposed to think it might have been used by the holy brothers, whenever they wished to sally forth and enjoy the cool air from the river in their hours of recreation. The river alone separated them from the precincts of the Hermitage, a view of which they commanded from this walk.

I have often fancied, as I looked across the Tavy, that I could see the Gothic oratory as it once appeared about the spring; the roof which formerly overarched it, the sculptured image of the Baptist, in his raiment of camel's hair, as he stood in a niche above, pointing with his hand to the holy well beneath, and holding in the other a staff with the banner of the Agnus Dei. The crucifix, the hour-glass, and the skull appear on the rough-hewn table, and there kneels the venerable hermit, engaged in the office of his evening prayers; as the "small birds" twitter on the boughs around his cell, and seek their nest amid a canopy of leaves, whilst the setting sun casts over the whole scene a departing gleam that "fires the proud tops" of the Abbey towers and walls, or flashes on the rushing waters in meteor rays of light. The stillness of evening settles on all around; not a human sound breaks the universal repose: the masses of rock, now seen only in their outline, assume a variety of dark and

fantastic forms, as the constant murmur of the Tavy, that never ceases, seems to find its echo in the "listening heart," till slowly flinging its sounds (as the light of day withdraws) over hill and vale and water, I am awakened from these thoughts of other times; as (in the language of the poet, who has thus expressed it, in a line of matchless beauty for its euphony) I listen, and

> "Hear the bell from the tower, toll! toll! through the silence of evening."

These are "thick coming fancies," that steal upon the mind in hours of poetry and of feeling—but the reality is before me; there lies the once holy, and the ever pure spring of St. John, unsheltered, open to the sunshine or the storm; those just emblems of the fortunes experienced by the departed guardians of this fountain. Oh! thoughts of innocence and peace, how do ye delight to pause on the shadowy or the mouldering records of former years! How do ye whisper to one who welcomes you as sweet and pleasant friends; that a few years more, and, over the name and the remembrance of that one, oblivion shall roll her dark and "rayless night," even as it is now falling, like a mantle, on these once stately towers. But there is a memory in Heaven, and being a record of mercy, it can never be blotted out. Such is the comfort of all who feel (in the words of Montesinos) "the weight of time and of eternity upon the spirit."

Dear Sir,

Ever faithfully and respectfully yours,

ANNA E. BRAY.

LETTER XXV.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

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CONTENTS:—Abbey burnt by the Danes—Hengist-down—Scene of a great Battle—Horse Bridge—Some conjectures concerning it—Wars during the Saxon era—Saxon Princes of the West—Arthur, his career—Saxons and Danes—Their fierce contests near Tavistock—Adage respecting one of their battles—The Danes ravage Tavistock; destroy the Abbey—It rises again—Its benefactors—Livingus, its munificent Abbot—Brief notice of his history—His death; buried in the Abbey—Lands, deeds, privileges, benefactions, charters, &c. &c., conferred on the Abbey—Abbots grown rich; parish priest so poor as to petition for a pair of shoes—John Banham made a mitred Abbot—Anglo-Saxon Monasteries, their simplicity and piety—Benedictines, their dress, &c.—Their hospitality.

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Vicarage, Tavistock, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

AFTER having, in my former letters, traced the history of our Abbey from its foundation to its completion in the year 981, I have now to speak of the first severe shock it experienced by a change of fortune, for scarcely had this magnificent structure stood thirty years, ere the Danes became its ruin.

The first appearance of those barbarians on our shores was about the close of the eighth century, when Brithric reigned in Wessex.. In the time of Egbert they pillaged the Isle of Sheppey, and soon after gained a great victory at Charmouth, in Dorsetshire; where they murdered two bishops, and kept possession of their camp. But the greatest incursion in this part of the West was in 835. The

Saxon Chronicle states, that a large fleet of these marauders came to the "West Welch"—the people of Cornwall—who united their forces with them, and made war on Egbert. The circumstance of the men of Cornwall thus joining heathens to carry arms into the territory of a Christian prince may be considered a strong confirmation of the opinion that they still clung to the old superstitions of the ancient Britons, and were not yet converted to the truth. Egbert, when he heard of this alliance against him, "marched with an army (says the same Chronicle) and fought with them at Hengest-dune, and there he put to flight both the Welch and the Danes."

Hengest-dune (now called *Hengesdown**, and sometimes Hingston) is in our neighbourhood; and not very far distant from it is *Horse Bridge;* and I cannot help entertaining the conjecture that the hill where Egbert thus beat the forces combined against him derived its name from some battle fought long *before* his time, in the days of Vortigern, the British prince. I shall here state the reasons which have induced me to venture this conjecture.

There is no record, that I am aware of, in existence, by which we have any authority for saying that the Saxon brothers, Hengist and Horsa (when they visited this country and so cruelly massacred the Britons) were ever in *this* part of England. Yet

* There are several barrows on Hengist-down: one or two of which (says Mr. Carrington, jun., in the Devonport Guide) were opened a few years since. In one of them they found a human skull and several bones. A druidical cell (corresponding in its appearance to those called by Davies "arkite cells" of the bards) was also dug up on Hengist-down many years ago. Near Cotele, a narrow glen is still called *Danes Combe;* the Danes having past through it on their way to meet Egbert in battle.

the thing seems to me not improbable, nor impossible. The records of that time were very imperfect. The principal historian, Witichindus, a Saxon, might not have been acquainted with every minute circumstance of the period about which he wrote. And when we recollect how many monasteries in this country were afterwards burnt by the Danes, we cannot but conclude some chronicles or documents, that would have thrown much light on our early history, were consumed in the flames.

It is so remarkable a circumstance that Hengist-down should lie not very far from Horse Bridge*, that it is a strong temptation to fancy those places derived their names from Hengist and Horsa. Let it also be remembered that Vortigern (who leagued with those chiefs, and by his base treachery and intrigues fixed the Saxon yoke on his countrymen) was Earl or Heretoge of *Cornwall*. The very station he held connected him more particularly with the Cornish Britons, and with the people of Devon: they were also numbered with those who made the longest and most vigorous resistance against the Saxon wolves; and though the greatest battle took place at Bampton, where the miserable Britons lost (according to the Saxon Chronicle) two thousand and forty-six of their bravest men, yet many battles were fought of less import, previous to that decisive engagement. Might it not then be possible that one of these "many battles" was on the borders of Cornwall, where Vortigern, the base Heretoge of that county, might even have guided Hengist and

* Horse Bridge is a beautiful object in a beautiful spot; it crosses the river Tamar, that divides Cornwall and Devon. It is noticed by Baretti, in his delightful letters.

Horsa; and where each (the one on the hill, and the other at the pass of the river) might have achieved a minor victory; and so have left their names as memorials to those places?—names that have survived stone or brass, and still may point out to the local historian the scene of carnage and victory. How much light will even a name throw on a place, where it awakens a spirit of inquiry! How pleasant is it to sit at a desk and settle about the site of battles, and the tyrants who fought them, a thousand years ago! You will, I dare say, smile at my conjectures; but I will endeavour yet further to show they are not so wild as they might at first be imagined.

That *this* part of England was the scene of many fierce engagements, long before the time of Egbert, is proved by historical facts. Encouraged by the success of Hengist, many Saxon adventurers crossed the seas, and eventually gained a footing in Britain. Amongst these was Cerdic, the founder of the West Saxon Kingdom, who was opposed in his career by Aurelius Ambrosius, and the heroic Prince Arthur; whose virtues became so magnified by the bards, and his real actions so blended with those purely fabulous, that, like Hercules, he was rendered quite as much a god of mythology in Britain, as that renowned and laborious hero was in Greece; and who, likewise, received his divinity from the poets.

That Arthur was an extraordinary prince, a light amidst darkness, cannot be doubted; the very extravagance of his fame had in all probability its foundation in the enthusiasm and admiration he inspired amongst his countrymen; for glory in a half civilized nation is ever the result of actions which so far surpass the capabilities of the ordinary race of men who

witness them, that they attribute such achievements to some power more than human vested in the person of their hero, who speedily becomes their God. Such almost was Arthur with the Britons; but whatever might have been his valour or his success, it appears he did not wholly subdue Cerdic, who, after a struggle of several years, conquered many of the *western* parts of this kingdom. His son Cynric succeeded to the throne of Wessex; and his grandson Ceaulin obtained a great battle over the Britons in Gloucestershire, which so enabled him to enlarge the extent of his kingdom, that he added to it those shires now called Somerset and Devon.

Though the Saxons had gained thus far a permanent footing in England, yet we have seen, by a vast number of facts, that the Britons were not wholly subdued; since Cornwall and the adjacent parts of Devon (in which no doubt Dartmoor, on the borders of the latter, was included) might still, in a great measure, be called their own. For many years a continual warfare had been kept up between the Britons and Saxons, till Egbert, who succeeded Brihtric in the throne of Wessex, in 801, after devoting his first cares to the welfare of his people, attempted the difficult task of reducing the ancient British chieftains to his obedience; and the battle of Hengist-down was decisive, though he was not the aggressor in that contest.

That the Danes made great havoc in these parts at a subsequent period is well known. They burnt the cathedral and palace of Launceston in Cornwall, twelve miles from this town, which caused the bishop's see to be removed to St. Germain's; and the ancient Saxon church there built still remains a

beautiful object in the eye of the antiquary and the artist. Lidford (of which more hereafter) was also burnt and ravaged; and to this day in Tavistock we have the following tradition respecting the havoc they made here. After the Danes landed near Danescombe, and met with a repulse on Hengist-down, some of them escaped, crossed the Tamar, and surprised Tavistock, rushing into the town from a rugged hill by the side of the old Launceston road, in those days said to have been the only entrance from the West. The inhabitants armed to a man, met them at the foot of the above-named hill; a great battle ensued, which gave rise to the old adage—

> "The blood which flowed down West Street
> Would heave a stone a pound weight."

I am also informed (since I wrote my previous letters), that a tradition is still current in this place, which asserts that Oakhampton Castle was a favourite residence with Orgar, Earl of Devon. Not having had an opportunity of acquainting myself with the history of that castle, (whose singular and romantic ruins I have seen with admiration,) I cannot say how far this is likely to be false or true; though when that tradition adds, as it does, that Orgar was *residing* there at the period Tavistock Abbey was burnt by the Danes, we know, by chronological records, it must be incorrect; as *he* died twenty years before the conflagration took place. Two or three forts at the mouth of the Tamar, nearly opposite Mount Edgecumbe, I am assured, are considered to have been very ancient constructions; and were most probably intended to protect the coast from the incursions of these foreign marauders.

It was in the year 997 that a Danish fleet, under the command of Sweyn, entered the Severn; and after numerous successful depredations, sailed round the Land's End, and finally turned its course up the Tamar. Though these invaders then burnt Lidford, they must have quitted their ships many miles distant from that most ancient town; since never at any period could the Tamar have been navigable higher than New Bridge, three miles from Tavistock. They carried fire and sword throughout the country; and our abbey, but thirty-six years after its foundation, was plundered and burnt to the ground. The marauders soon returned to their ships, laden with the spoil they had accumulated.

Of the original building nothing perhaps remains, unless we except one portion of the boundary walls, (those of our garden,) which must have been fireproof, as there never was any lead or wood work about them; and the blocks of stone of which they are composed are held together with a cement so hard and admirable, that it appears to be like that seen in the stupendous walls of Pevensey Castle, the old Roman fortress on the Sussex coast.

The abbey thus burnt and ravaged, though it remained for some time in ruins, was yet destined like the fabled phœnix, to rise once more from its ashes. By whom it was rebuilt is not, I believe, exactly known; most probably not by an individual, but by many benefactors. Amongst these we may number Le Arcedekne, Vepont, Ferrars, Fitz-Bernard, Edgecumbe, and others. My brother considers that its re-erection was probably owing to the exertions and liberality of Livingus, who was nephew to Brithwald, Bishop of St. Germain's, in Cornwall.

This prelate is, indeed, so connected with the history of our abbey, that it may not here be amiss to offer some brief account of him.

Hooker and Prince reckon him amongst the illustrious natives of this county; and the latter is careful in distinguishing him from Livingus, surnamed Elstanus, Archbishop of Canterbury, who crowned Canute king of England, and died in 1020.

Certain it is that the abbey must have been re-erected in his time; and so far finished as to be capable of receiving the monks, since our Livingus was some time abbot of Tavistock, and was advanced to the see of Devon in 1032. His palace stood at Crediton, and he was the last bishop who there resided during life. Canute valued him for his piety and wisdom; and so much was he in favour with that king, that he made choice of the Bishop of Devonshire as the companion of his journey to the tomb of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome. Returning in the same year, 1031, Livingus found his uncle, Brithwald, dead; upon which Canute, from the great love he bore to the companion of his pilgrimage, gave him his late uncle's see of St. Germain's in Cornwall, allowing him still to hold Crediton, and not long after he added to these dignities by making him Bishop of Worcester.

It is not improbable that such a plurality of prelacies being heaped on the favourite excited discontent in those who aspired to church preferment, and who might think they were overlooked or neglected for the sake of one man, in their own opinion not more deserving than themselves. Hence might have arisen envy, the fertile mother of falsehood and slander; and the worthy character of the prelate

proved to be no security against the shafts aimed at him by such enemies as these: for he was charged by Alfricus, Archbishop of York, as being accessary to the death of Alfred, the eldest son of King Ethelred; the archbishop having himself been removed from his own see but a short time before, on account of his busy temper in secular affairs.

Alfred's death had been brought about by many circumstances that excited a general feeling of commiseration for the unfortunate young prince. Canute, though he had engaged with the Duke of Normandy that his issue by his marriage with Emma should become his successors, nevertheless named Harold, the son of a former union, his heir to the crown, to the great discontent of the English; who desired to see Hardicanute, a prince born among them, succeed to the throne. The jealousies of these contending parties ran so high, that a civil war was likely to be the result, when a present peace was secured by compromise. The terms were, that Harold should hold the provinces north of the Thames, and Hardicanute keep those on the south, and during the absence of the last-named prince, his mother Emma assumed the regal authority in the place of her son.

But however secure Harold might appear to be in his possessions, he thought himself not so whilst the sons of Emma by her former husband, Ethelred the Saxon, were in existence. Earl Godwin, from motives of ambition, had espoused the interests of Harold, and was kept firm to them by a hope being held out that his daughter should become the wife of that tyrant. He did not hesitate, therefore, to join in the cruel plan now framed for the de-

struction of the young Saxon princes, who at this time were with their mother, Queen Emma, at Winchester; and as some said, with a view to attempt making good their pretensions to the crown. If Harold knew, or only suspected their intentions, is a matter of doubt; but certain it is, he invited Alfred, the elder brother, to London, with every promise of an honourable reception. Thus was he deceived; and setting forward on his way, attended by many followers, he had not proceeded farther than Guildford in Surrey, when he was surprised by the treacherous Earl Godwin, his people slain, and himself, cruelly deprived of sight, committed as a prisoner to the monastery of Ely, where it pleased God to end his sufferings by a speedy death.

This cruel deed appears to have excited a general feeling of indignation; and it is not improbable Alfricus might seek to gain his own restoration to the see of York, by paying court to the popular feeling; and to Harold, in the endeavour to fasten the guilt of the murder on another man, when the king was grievously suspected of being concerned in the act. A bishop that held three sees in his own person was not, perhaps, he considered, the worst object he could fasten upon to make him appear criminal; and the worthy Livingus was accordingly vehemently accused by the deposed archbishop. The affair must have been unusually prolonged, as not till the reign of Hardicanute did the artful Alfricus so far succeed as to obtain the dismissal of the innocent bishop from his preferments in the church. This deprivation did not, however, last long. It is most probable that Livingus owed his restoration not so much to his want of guilt, for that

was a poor plea against tyranny, as to the cunning and the contemptible conduct of the king; for Hardicanute, notwithstanding his wrath towards the murderers of his half-brother, was mean and base enough to accept a bribe (a gilded galley manned by rowers decorated with bracelets of gold) from Earl Godwin, who thus found an easy way to escape justice. In order to let him appear guilty, it was necessary to acquit Livingus, who had been so falsely accused as his accomplice in the crime.

These circumstances form the most probable solution of the cause that procured the restoration of the Bishop of Devonshire to all his honours; no small instance of good fortune in the reign of such a tyrant; and this event seems to be the last of any public import in the life of Livingus. His latter days were spent in peace, in the regular discharge of his episcopal duties, and in the innocent and delightful pursuits of letters. He composed during his retirement a work, which, could it now be recovered, would form, indeed, one of the curiosities of literatnre; according to Prince's translation, its title was "Canute's Pilgrimage, and his own Doings."

Livingus, notwithstanding all his troubles, lived through the reigns of four kings; a thing not very common with one so eminent, who had been assailed by the envy and jealousy of others in times so marked by violence and injustice. Historians and antiquaries differ as to the place of his death; but Hooker is of opinion that it occurred at his favourite Monastery of Tavistock; of which he had been chosen the first abbot after its rebuilding, and where his munificence had been so largely displayed. However his mind might be at rest at the time of

his dissolution, he could hardly be said to depart in peace; since the monks have recorded that, at the very hour of his decease, the greatest storm shook all England that had been felt for many years.—"Horrisonus crepitus per totam Angliam auditus, ut ruina et finis totius putareter orbis." Prince, however, is of opinion that this "horrible crack of thunder," as he calls it, "did rather prognosticate the ruin which threatened the liberties of England" on that great change which so speedily succeeded, in the invasion of our island by William the Conqueror. Be this as it may, Livingus died as the worthy would wish to die, in a good old age, in favour with God and man. He was buried in the Abbey Church of Tavistock. Hooker says he departed this life on the 23d of March, 1049; but the Saxon Chronicle fixes that event in 1044, when it simply states, "This year Living, Bishop of Devonshire, died, and the king's priest Leofric succeeded him."

Another remarkable person also ended his days in our abbey in these early times; and he was Edwy Atheling, a son of King Ethelred, grandson of Elfrida, and great grandson of Orgar, the founder. Alarmed by the jealousy of Canute, who, like his son Harold, looked with an eye of suspicion on the princes of the Saxon line, Edwy sought a refuge in the abbey: he did not very long survive, and was buried in the church; no vestige remains of his tomb.

Many noble persons were munificent patrons of the monastic foundation of Tavistock. William Rufus, in the year 1096, confirmed to the monks a mansion called Walsinton, which they made it appear they had a right to consider their own, time out

of mind, though some busy men on the part of the crown would have deprived them of that possession.

The grant of Walsinton was confirmed to Tavistock in the presence of Walchaline, Bishop of Winchester, Turstin, superior of Glastonbury, and other ecclesiastics, by the king presenting to the abbot an ivory knife, on the handle of which were these words:—Ego Willielmus Rex dedi Deo, et Sanctæ Mariæ de Tavistoc terram Wlerintune.

From Dugdale, we likewise learn that Robert Old Bridge gave to the abbey the lands of Wynemerston, on a stipulation that the lord abbot should pay to him ten marks in silver, with liberty for him to take up his abode within the walls whenever he might wish to retire from the world; and in the interval, that, every day he should visit or continue in Tavistock, he might claim the allowance given to one monk, if he chose to ask for it.

Robert Fitz Baldwin restored the lands of Passeford. King Henry I. ordered Rinberg and Eudelipe, which had been taken from the monks, to be restored. He granted to them likewise all the churches in the isles of Scilly, confirmed to them by his son Reginald, Earl of Cornwall, the tithes of which were granted to the abbey by the Bishop of Exeter at that period. King Edward took the church of the island of Enmour, in Scilly, under his protection, ordering the constable of the castle there to guard the same from all insults and injuries.

By deed of "Odo le Arcedeakne," knight, bearing date the day of St. Mark the Evangelist, the seventeenth of Edward I., he resigns to the monks for the health of his own soul, and the souls of all his family, the lands of Westlydeton; and the said

monks for the good of their own souls, in the year 1291, appropriated all the revenues of these lands to the purchase of clothes and shoes for the poor in Christ, to be yearly distributed among them on the feast of All Souls.

By an agreement between the Abbot of Tavistock and the Prior of Plymton, the latter obliged himself and his successors to do certain acts of suit and service to the former; namely, to attend the abbot, at his own charges, whenever he made his visitation within the diocese of Exeter; to provide him with sundry loaves of white bread, two flagons of wine, and five wax tapers, whenever he visited his manor of Plymstocke; to present every new abbot with a palfrey and a groom during his perambulation; to confirm his rights, until the day of his instalment; and on the feast of St. Michael, to provide him with a chaplain, who was a good clerk, for the church of Plymstocke.

Bronscombe, the celebrated Bishop of Exeter*, appropriated to our abbey the churches of Tavistock, Lamerton, Middleton, Abbedesham, Northpyderwyn, Hatherleigh, and Brentor. The bull of Pope Celestin, dated 1193, confirmed all donations made to this house, and all privileges whatsoever. In the year 1280, Reginald Ferrars, the Lord of Beer,

* His tomb, in Exeter Cathedral, still exists, and for the pure style and beauty of its execution ranks amongst the finest in Europe. The attitude in which the figure reposes, the head, limbs and draperies, remind one, in their grandeur and simplicity, of the works of Raphael. It is much to be regretted that about ten years since, the workmen, in repairing the cathedral, knocked off a hand from this effigy, and displaced an angel that supported the head. The latter was restored; but no one having felt interest enough about the tomb to inquire for the hand, it was, I believe, never found.

and Isota of Ferrars, of Nyweton Ferrars, gave to the monks of the abbey of Tavistock all their lands in Cornewoode, on their performing the customary homage for the same.

In the second of Richard II., William Edgecumbe, of Cotele, resigned to the abbey all claim on the park of Innersleigh, in the manor of Middleton, and John D'Abernon of Bradeford, gave to the same house all his manor of Wyke, near Brentor, and his lands and tenements at Holywell. Many other were the benefactors to this costly foundation; but I have here mentioned the principal.

Over this monastery presided thirty-six abbots, from its institution to the time of its dissolution. Two of these, Livingus and Aldred, were made bishops; the latter is said to have placed the crown on the head of William the Conqueror. John Dynington, who was the superior in 1450, was charged by one of the Bishops of Exeter with too much attention to the adornment of his person, and possibly with some truth; as he was the man who stirred the question with King Henry VI., that the abbots of Tavistock should be allowed to enjoy the privilege of wearing the pontificalia—the licence for which I shall presently copy from my brother's notices. Its particularity forms a very good illustration of the ecclesiastical vestments of the time. If, however, John Dynington had a too curious taste in his attire, it should seem he did not confine his attention to outward things of that description; and that he was not less attentive to the edifices of his community. My brother says of him: "Dynington probably made large repairs and additions to the buildings of the abbey, as most of the

remains of these now extant are characterized by the deep label moulding, and obtusely pointed arch which became the prevailing characteristics of Gothic architecture towards the close of the fifteenth century. The great gate of the abbey is decorated with two minarets of this period, and the parapet of its pointed roof is crenellated and embattled; certainly a misapplication of the crenellated form, and a specimen of perverted taste."

Whilst the abbot and his monks were, as above stated, grown rich, and had all things subservient to their desires and their luxuries, the poor parish priest was labouring with indigence and want. Some few years since, among the papers in the parish chest, was found a petition from the officiating priest to the parishioners assembled in the vestry, absolutely begging for a pair of shoes! The document, which was found and read by my husband's father, is no longer in existence, (at least we find no traces of it,) or I should here insert it. From this petition we may gather that the worthy monks who took such care of their own souls, as to give away the revenues of Westlydeton in apparel and shoes to the "poor in Christ," did not consider their poor brother of the secular clergy to be of that number, and so they let him go barefoot. This is a trifling circumstance, but in such trifles as these we may trace the spirit of jealousy between the monks and the parish priests, that commenced in the time of Dunstan, and was never after wholly set at rest. Truly the officiating minister was not overwhelmed with this world's goods, and with him they seem little to have regarded the text, that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel; for whilst the abbot of

Tavistock was, in the reign of Henry VIII., honored with a mitre, and made a peer of the realm, by the title of Baron of Hurdwick (which is now one of the titles of the Duke of Bedford, to whose ancestors the lands of the abbey were granted at the dissolution,) and enjoyed revenues of nearly one thousand a-year, in those days an enormous income; the poor priest of Tavistock Church was only entitled to ten pounds per annum.

John Banham, the abbot who received the mitre, and was called to Parliament by Henry VIII. the same year, maintained a long contest with Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, about the liberties of his church, and was so far successful that he gained the sanction of the Pope for what he did, who excommunicated the luckless Bishop but a short time before his death; so that his body could not be buried till this fearful sentence was removed by an application to Rome.

I have a few observations to add concerning the order of monks here established during so long a period, and then, for the present, I must say adieu.

In the Anglo-Saxon monasteries, where there was much of true holiness, as well as of superstition, the utmost simplicity prevailed in regard to dress, especially after the Benedictine rule had, in the ninth century, usurped that of all others in England. Here, then, may we fancy that we see the good Livingus in his Benedictine attire,—a tunic and cowl, black in colour, and, in his day, formed of the coarsest woollen stuff; a broad belt girds his garments about the middle, from which depends his *almonier*, or little pouch; he carries about him a knife, a steel pen, and a table-book to note down his thoughts; a rosary

is by his side; a cross suspended on his breast; his black mantle is large and full, and, as an abbot, he has a right to wear it without as well as within the church.

The brothers of his order wear a black scapula as their ordinary or working dress; they also have a cowl, but their long woollen mantle is worn only in the church. In addition to the knife, each monk is supplied with a needle, and, those who are most holy, with a rod, to inflict on themselves, in the most literal manner,

"Much castigation, exercise devout."

Hair shirts were, likewise, often worn; they were indeed of very ancient date, and had, no doubt, their origin in the East; for St. Chrysostom mentions the hair shirt as forming part of the dress of the oriental monks. I am inclined to think that such hair shirt was not one of torture, and that Chrysostom referred to the material of which eastern clothing was then generally made—the camel and the goats' hair. In other countries a less delicate material might have been adopted, and became an irritating and troublesome dress when worn next the skin. But as we know that to this day the camel's-hair shawls of India are the softest in the world, how can we believe that the early eastern clothing formed of it could have been anything like a garb of torture?

The monks in the times of the Anglo-Saxons were bare-legged, and their "shoon" resembled the classical sandal. Fosbrooke in his very learned work on monachism, mentions that visiters were received among them, the holy men "giving them water to cleanse their hands, washing their feet, wiping them with a towel, and inviting them to dine at nine

o'clock in the morning." And the rule of Pachomius orders "that the feet of visiters be washed, even if clerks or holy monks."

The Benedictines were celebrated for their charity and hospitality to strangers; a noble hall is generally found in the edifices of their order. There was one at Tavistock; but all account of what still remains of the abbey I must defer till my next letter. In the interval,

Allow me to remain, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully and truly yours,

ANNA E. BRAY.

LETTER XXVI.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Dissolution of the Abbey—Devastation of the Reformation—Henry VIII. not governed by religious motives in throwing off the yoke of Rome—His Six Articles—Cupidity of his courtiers and dependents—Their selfishness in the spoliation of the Church—Sixteenth century one of great corruption—The time of chastisement—Immediate evils attending the ruin of monasteries—Reformed Clergy, with few exceptions, ignorant men—Indecency and impiety in the spoliation of the abbey churches—Edward VI., his amiable character—Fiery trial reserved for the holy martyrs of the Reformation—Learned and pious men who flourished in the succeeding reigns, particularly in that of Charles I.—Cardinal Maury's opinion not founded on truth—Subject resumed—Dissolution of Tavistock Abbey—Last abbot—Grant of the abbey lands to the Russell family—Mr. Bray's account of the remains of the abbey buildings—Chapter-house taken down—Havoc amongst the antiquities—Recent discoveries—The gateway S. W.—Betsy Grimbal's tower—Murder there committed—Superstition respecting it—The porch-pinnacle—Bones of an infant found in breaking into a wall—Abbot's hall—Refectory—Sarcophagus—Giant's bones—Saxon school—Tower remarkable for masonry—Parish church—Extracts from some very curious old churchwarden's accounts—Old paintings on panel—The church-yard—The bells—Singular custom of the sexton at funerals—Superstition of Midsummer eve—Death of the Luggars—Their story related—Muffled bells at their funeral—Fitz and Glanville, their monuments—Honorary monument to Queen Elizabeth; to Fortescue—Altar, decorated—Gothic table—Saxon school—Printing press—Books printed in the abbey—Extract, given at large, from the Rev. George Oliver's most interesting account of all the abbots of Tavistock, copied by him from the Registry of the Bishops preserved at Exeter.

Vicarage, Tavistock, August 29, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

The next event which I have to communicate respecting our abbey is its dissolution; an occur-

rence not only in this instance, but in all others throughout the kingdom, sincerely to be regretted by every unprejudiced Protestant, for surely the monasteries, as well as the church, might have been reformed without being entirely overthrown.

You have so ably expressed your opinion on this point, in the 'Colloquies,' and I have ventured to give mine, in a former letter, on the same subject, that little need here be said, unless it be to regret that violence, that angry spirit which generally accompanies all great changes, even when they are ultimately a benefit; so much does enmity or passion mingle its leaven with the best things—a sad proof of the imperfection of human nature, and a no less salutary warning to show how careful all should be who venture to touch on ancient institutions, lest they do more than is necessary, and in their haste overthrow that which they can never afterwards repair. Old buildings, like old customs and laws, are not the growth of a day; years of labour and generations of wisdom have been as the parents of both, and pity is it that a few months or days of innovation, and a few thoughtless or violent men should make such destruction, and render all the toils of the past as nothing.

The benefits of the Reformation are well understood, the sins of it have been less noticed; and that good came out of so much evil was more the result of divine than human causes. God, in the wisdom of his inscrutable counsels, works by means that on a first view sometimes appear contradictory. Bad men are frequently but as his instruments, while they seem to follow the career of their own selfish or stormy passions; for in the end we generally find

he but employs them, as he does the lightning and the winds, to clear away what is noxious, to purify, or to renovate; when the beautiful and the serene in the moral world follow after; even as the bow of promise, and a bright sun, and a refreshed earth succeed the disturbance and turmoil of the elements in that physical world which lies before our view.

That Henry VIII., when he threw off the yoke of Rome, when he repudiated a blameless wife, and overthrew monasteries and abbies, was really a reformer for the sake of the reformed faith, no one, I believe, of any party, for a moment even fancies. His Six Articles are sufficient proof that it was the restraining power, and not the corrupt doctrine of the Church of Rome, that he was anxious to destroy; and the cupidity, the pride, the extravagant living of his hungry dependents and courtiers caught eagerly at the lure that such rich prizes as desecrated church lands held out, and—"down with the monasteries for their abuses" was then the plea; when the cry of the daughter of the horse-leech, "Give, give," would better have expressed the motive.

That the sixteenth century was one of great corruption, of great immorality, of much false religion, and of many enormities in its professors, cannot be denied. The time was ripe for chastisement, and God sent the storm, and idolatry and falsehood, in this country, fell before it. But the *immediate* effects were, perhaps intended, as they were found to be, an evil. For, saving a few such men as Latimer and Cranmer, how long was it before the reformed clergy, who succeeded the overthrow of the popish priests, were truly worthy their high calling as guides and leaders of the flock of Christ!

Poor livings found but poor scholars and needy men to fill their place. The clergy were degraded into an impoverished and dependent body in the eyes of the people; and contempt with the vulgar was the certain consequence of such misfortunes: since base men ever look on poverty as a crime—they respect what a man has more than what he is; and though the populace were no longer allowed to feed their imagination with the splendid shows, or the candles, and the flowers, and the images of the Church of Rome, their reason was not much more enlightened than whilst it had been held in its former state of darkness. The idol Superstition was torn away; but the pedestal, on which she stood erect, Ignorance, still remained, and too many made it as an altar of sacrifice to the spirit of evil against the church. Can we then wonder that to rifle abbeys, to violate the sanctuary, to tear down the noblest monuments of piety and of art (which our forefathers in singleness of heart had offered as a habitation fit for the worship of their God); to commit sacrilege, deface the effigies of the great, the noble, and the good, to disturb from their place of repose the mouldering ashes of the dead, to seize the very plate from the altar, and, like the impious king of old, to make it subservient to the purposes of luxury and indulgence, were things that the bold, the avaricious, and the heartless did without remorse; whilst the fearful looked on and trembled, and the wicked and the ignorant looked on and laughed. These were the sins of the Reformation. As the poor lost the charity of those ancient houses whose doors had been ever open to relieve them, the old and the pious, (for there were many,) who had re-

tired from a world of which they were grown weary, were once more cast upon its stormy waters, when they were but themselves a wreck, and could no longer stem the torrent, or with a safe conscience sail down the current of the times. But these moral evils had their date; and though days of misery, of persecution, and of sorrows "even unto death," intervened, the sun of the Reformation at length came forth from the cloud, and the harvest and the joy spread beneath its beams.

The guardian king, who watched its progress with so much zeal and love, was too soon snatched from this world to one where his pure spirit was destined to find its early and rich reward. Happy for himself, but grievous for England, Edward died before even his days of such glorious promise had ripened into manhood. He lived not to bless this country with an age "full of years and full of honours;" but to him may truly be applied what a French writer said of a Dauphin of France, who also died in his youth: "That heaven, counting his virtues, esteemed him old, and took him to his rest."

The day of the fiery trial was next reserved for the Reformation; and as the holy martyrs stood in prayer and agony, (like their Redeemer in the garden,) burning at the stake, the spirit of the Reformed Church caught brightness from their flames, and came forth from them, as did the brothers from the fiery furnace, glorifying God in the face of all the world. The church had stood the trial and approved itself worthy, and God removed the flaming sword from the tree of life, and gave the olive branch in its stead.

From that time, down to the days of Charles the

First, great and shining lights arose in succession; and not since the days of the Fathers, who came after the apostles, have, perhaps, so many truly great divines been found in any church as in that of the Reformed and Established Church of England. In proof of this, who that feels a pride in the virtue, the genius, the piety of his native land, can do other than glory in repeating the names of Hooker, the author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity;'—of Fuller, whose sermons, though, like those of the admirable Latimer, somewhat quaint, are only less valued than his Church History because they are less known;—of the learned and orthodox Brownrigg;—of Hall, venerable alike in his writings and his life;—of the pious and single-hearted Bishop Andrews;—of the apostolic Jeremy Taylor;—the admirable Allestree and Donne;—of Raleigh, (the nephew of the great Sir Walter Raleigh,) who was basely murdered in his prison, where he had been consigned for adhering to the cause of his unfortunate master, Charles the First? Of this divine, Chillingworth said, "he was the most powerful reasoner he had ever encountered;" and Raleigh's sermon on one of the most difficult points of doctrine—that of election consistent with free-will—is argued with such clearness and strength, that there needs no other proof how well merited was the eulogium of his friend. But what praise shall speak the excellencies of Farrindon? of Farrindon, now slumbering in neglect, but whose works must surely one day be revived; and whose power to touch the heart, though it were hard as a rock, and make it yield a spring of living waters, has never yet been exceeded by any writer of any age;—of Beveridge, whose sermon on the text

"I am that I am," Steele (to whom many of the obsolete divines were unknown) considered the finest in our language. Barrow is known to every student; but not so Harris, who preached in London during the plague, with the fearlessness, the devotion, and the power of a true servant of God, sent at such a moment to call all men to repentance.

Had Cardinal Maury, the author of the celebrated French work on the 'Eloquence of the Pulpit,' known the writings of these men (and many others might be named) he would never have said that we had neither a Masillon, nor a Bourdaloue, nor a Bossuet in our English divinity; nor would he have considered the only old divine with whom he seems to be really acquainted in our language, the sensible and worthy Tillotson, as our best sermonist. But no wonder that foreigners underrate us, when we underrate ourselves, and suffer the works of such a man as Farrindon to remain only in a few scarce copies, unread, neglected, almost totally unknown, whilst we continually reprint the writings of Barrow and Taylor, as if they (excellent as they are) were the *only* works worthy of becoming standard in the divinity of our Established Church*.

To return, however, from this digression to our abbey. In the notices before quoted, and written by

* For the delight afforded me in the perusal of these old divines, I am indebted to Mr. Bray, by whose advice I read many of their best works. He published some years ago a compressed and modernized selection from several of them. Indeed he had studied these writers as sedulously as a painter would study in the schools of the great Italian masters. Since then his attention has been turned to original composition; but he had previously prepared (and still has by him unpublished), a large collection, in a readable and popular form, from these old writers, as well as translations from the most eloquent of the

my brother, I find he thus speaks of the circumstances attending its dissolution:—"John Pyryn succeeded Banham, and, with the monks assembled in chapter, surrendered the abbey to the King's commissioners on the 20th March, 1538. Of the twenty-two signatures which appear on the margin of the deed of surrender, the following may be noted. The abbot and the prior sign first—'Per me Joh'em Abbate,' 'per me Robertu Walsh, priore'—then indiscriminately are found—'Joh'es Harriss, sub-prior, Ryc (Ricardus) custos,' &c. The abbot retired on a pension of one hundred pounds per annum, at that period a very large one; the prior had a stipend of ten pounds per annum; the sub-prior one of eight pounds; the monks from six pounds to five pounds six shillings and eight-pence each; and two novices were allowed two pounds per annum. The abbot continued to reside at Tavistock *, in the enjoyment of the comfortable provision which had been assigned him: at which place, in the year 1549, he made his will, which being proved in April, 1550, we may conclude that he died about that time.

"The dissolved Abbey of Tavistock and its dependencies were, by the King's letter-patent, dated the fourth of July, in the thirty-first year of his reign, granted to John Lord Russel, Ann his wife, and their lawful heirs male, at a certain reserved rent †. Lord Russel had been received into the favour of Henry VII., knighted by his successor, and created a baron

Fathers. It is to be hoped these may all one day see the light, as in the present scarce and voluminous state of many of the original authors, they are little likely, in any other way, to become known to the general reader.

* The old house in which he lived has lately been taken down.

† See Farm Roll, Augmentation Office.

of the realm; nominated Lord Warden of the Stannaries in Devon and Cornwall, Lord Privy Seal, and one of the Councillors of Edward VI., during his minority. He was constituted Lord High Steward at the coronation of that youthful monarch, and on the insurrection which broke out at Sampford Courtenay, in Devon, and which was followed by the siege of the capital of the West, Exeter, Lord Russel marched against the rebels, totally routed and dispersed them. For these services he was shortly after created Earl of Bedford. It is not the object of these notes to enter at length into the history of this ancient and noble house; suffice it to say, that William, the fifth descendant from the Earl, was, in the reign of William and Mary, created Marquis of Tavistock and Duke of Bedford, and his present worthy descendant, John Duke of Bedford, is in possession of the lands and ecclesiastical impropriations of the dissolved abbey."

Having thus come to the dissolution of our monastery, something must here be said concerning the portions of the ancient buildings that still exist notwithstanding the havoc so largely and so repeatedly made amongst them. For this purpose I have been looking over Mr. Bray's manuscript notes, written several years since, respecting the remains of Tavistock Abbey. These observations may not have so much interest as he could wish; but as some of the vestiges he mentions are now no longer in existence, the notes of what he saw and described in his youth ought to be preserved. I have gleaned from a mass of papers what follows in this letter.

"The site," says Mr. Bray, "of the abbey extends from east to west along the north bank of the

river Tavy. The principal entrance was at the north, close to the eastern boundary. This gateway is in high preservation, with its gate at least as perfect as that at Temple Bar; to which it bears some resemblance, by having on one side a postern, or foot passage *. There are two other gateways to the south and west, the former of which leads to the banks of the river, where, till Guile or Abbey-bridge was erected, there was a ford; and the latter to the abbot's gardens and stew ponds, which still exist †.

"About one hundred years ago, a considerable portion of these venerable edifices was taken down, to erect on the spot the large but inconvenient building commonly called the Abbey-house. This havoc was committed by a Mr. Saunders, who, not for these barbarities, however, but for building so large a house on another man's property, was, and in a manner is still ridiculed, by the name of Folly Orchard being given to some grounds which he occupied with it. I never understood, as some assert, that he was the Duke of Bedford's steward; at any rate he certainly was not a *wise* one. A very old and intelligent lady of this place, Miss Adams, who remembers Saunders's wife, informs me that *part* of the building which he tore down was a school-house. Some have supposed that it was the Saxon school

* Mr. Bray tells me that ever since his remembrance, till very lately, this gateway was used by a fellmonger for drying wool. Under the flight of steps leading to it was the clink; but it is now destroyed, and he believes it was of no very ancient date. The place where prisoners are now confined is situated very near, though it does not communicate with the gateway, but with the ancient guildhall.

† This is no longer the case, recent alterations have destroyed all but one of the stew ponds.

and chapter-house, which Prince (who wrote not very long before Saunders committed these spoliations) thus describes. 'There is still standing the refectory, or common hall; a very spacious room, of great length, breadth, and height, lately converted into a Non-conformist meeting-house; and the Saxon school and chapter-house, a pile of great beauty, built so round as can possibly be marked with a compass; yet withal of large dimensions, there being on the inside thereof six-and-thirty seats wrought out in the walls, all arched overhead with curious hewn and carved stone *.'

"The gateway S.W." continues Mr. Bray, "communicated with the gardens and pleasure-ground of the abbey: it consists of a vaulted passage about nine paces in length, and eight feet in height, between two towers, that present to the front the three apparent sides of an octagon. The southern

* Prince also says—"The abbots' palace was a glorious building, now wholly demolished; of very late years was the kitchen standing, now razed to the foundation, being a large square room, open to the roof, which was of timber so geometrically done, that even architects themselves did admire the curiosity thereof."

Recent discoveries have proved that it was the chapter-house which Saunders, of barbarous memory, thus destroyed. In the year 1830, on making some additions to the Bedford Office, which stands close to the abbey-house (now an inn), part of the beautiful pavement of the chapter-house, consisting of tiles, bearing the figures of lions and fishes, was discovered. Mr. Kempe says of this—"that the lion passant, or rampant, has been borne in the armorial coat of the Earls of Cornwall ever since the time of Reginald (base son of Henry I., a benefactor to our abbey), and that by the fishes some allusion to the possessions in the Scilly Isles may be intended." I observed amongst the rubbish dug up on the spot where the tiles were found, part of a Gothic niche, beautifully carved, and still retaining its red and other colours, for it had been painted. The sight of this fragment made me but the more regret the miserable destruction which such a man as Saunders had been allowed to effect.

tower, called Betsey Grimbal's, is so denominated from a tradition that a woman thus named was there murdered by a soldier. Within my own recollection, there were many who pretended to show where the wall was stained with her blood; and when a child I was so little of a sceptic as firmly to believe that it was haunted, and never ventured to visit it alone. But, setting aside the want of verisimilitude in this vulgar fabrication, which from the locality of the situation should rather have suggested the story of some fair nun murdered, not by the hands of a soldier, but by some jealous monk, or enamoured abbot (of which I fear there were not a few, as a tale I have to relate may lead one to suspect), the stains in the wall, or rather the plaster which still adheres to it in some places, are solely the effects of damp. Probably some iron-stone, of which there is a great quantity in the neighbourhood, corroded by the wet, tinged the drops of a ferruginous or red colour that percolated through the cracks. However, allowing much for fabrication, we may fairly conclude that the story had its origin from some circumstance in which a female was concerned, and that some act of violence was committed on this spot.

"At the back of the Abbey-house (now the Bedford Arms) stands a porch, crowned with four lofty pinnacles, partially covered with the most luxuriant ivy. The ceiling of the vaulted entrance is of elegantly carved stone work.

"The upper room is also vaulted with pendent wood work. In it is a chimney. As there was no communication to it, the door-way in a different direction being blocked up, a passage was broken through the wall a few years since, near one of

the corners, where was a hollow buttress or turret. Here some infant bones were found; parts of the scull, some of the vertebræ and a thigh bone, which are still in my possession *. The porch here described leads to what was supposed to be the Abbots' Hall†.

"In making the foundation for the Abbey-house, the workmen dug up, according to tradition, a stone coffin, or sarcophagus, containing the bones now deposited in the church, and called *the giant's bones*. The sarcophagus is still in existence, and in my possession. It is very thick, but no more than four and a half feet long in the interior, and eighteen

* The bones above alluded to by Mr. Bray are those of a *very* young child, most probably a new-born infant. He keeps them in a carved horn box that belonged to the famous Sir Francis Drake. There is a passage in Fox's Book of Martyrs, which I well remember, though I have mislaid the note I made of it, wherein it was stated that at the dissolution of monasteries in this kingdom, the bones of infants were sometimes found in places where no such discoveries seemed likely to be suspected.

† Whilst copying the above from Mr. Bray's old papers, he tells me that in Lysons' Devon, Vol. ii. p. 474, he is referred to for supposing that the apartment till within the last three years used as a ball-room, and now taken down to give place to the new one, was the refectory. This supposition, which Mr. Bray mentioned to Mr. Lysons, arose from his father having told him that it was so called in the Duke of Bedford's rentals; and that what Browne Willis calls the *Refectory* was the Abbots' Hall. But he now rather doubts his father's correctness in this particular, especially as, for the same reason, the late Mr. Bray considered the Saxon school was under the ball-room, which does not correspond with the description given by Prince or Willis. He is the more disposed to think the latter antiquary right in regard to the Refectory (still used as a Unitarian meeting-house) as the Rev. Dr. Jago, of Milton Abbot, an aged gentleman, tells him that he recollects a stone pulpit that was affixed to the side of the wall in this apartment. It is well known that sermons or homilies were read to the monks whilst at dinner; and the custom is still observed in some religious houses on the continent.

and a quarter inches in depth. It is not much unlike the shape of a coffin, being larger in the middle than at either end. The bones are of an extraordinary size, both human thigh bones. One measures twenty one inches long by five inches and a half in circumference. The other is nineteen inches and a half long, by four inches and a half in circumference. On the authority of Mr. James Cole, the sexton, who shows them with the church, they are said to be the bones of Ordulph and his wife*. And though I presume not to assert that Ordulph, being himself a giant, would be content with less than a giantess for his partner, yet it seems not improbable that the smaller bone might have been that of his father, Orgar, Earl of Devon.

"From the size of the sarcophagus, if we suppose a giant was there deposited, he must have been tied neck and heels together. It is possible, indeed, that the bones might have been collected long after death and there placed as relics. And I am the more inclined to this opinion, as we know in what veneration the relics of the founder of an abbey were always held; and that father and son, who were the co-founders of our monastery, were both buried in it. There is every reason to believe † that the tomb of Orgar was not only repaired, but absolutely rebuilt, in the reign of Henry III. At that period, therefore, the bones of himself and of his son might have been collected and placed together. Or it is not impossible that the pious monks, on rebuilding the tomb of their

* Malmesbury expressly declares Ordulph was of gigantic stature.

† See Letter xxiii., Vol. ii.

founders, (after the abbey and its church had been burnt and ravaged by the Danes) might even then have exhumed and deposited their bones in one common sarcophagus, which had remained undiscovered till the work of destruction was again commenced within these hallowed enclosures by the barbarians of modern times, who dug them up in forming the foundations for the Abbey-house so often named, when that of the ancient chapter was torn down to make room for it.

"There are some interesting and picturesque remains, crowned with their lofty pinnacles, of the buildings belonging to the abbey, yet standing in good preservation near the principal entrance at the north. Amongst them may be observed a tower, remarkable for the beauty of its masonry. The adjoining apartments, in the occupation of a miller, overlook the river Tavy; and seen from the opposite bank, present altogether an admirable subject for the pencil of an artist like Prout.

"I have omitted to mention that the old ball-room, erroneously called the Refectory, stood nearly north by south: it is on the first floor; and I have reason to think communicated with what was considered the Abbots' Hall (and which Browne Willis, I doubt not correctly, declared to have been the Refectory), by means of a gallery. The old ball-room had also a passage of communication with the Abbey-house. Whilst my father lived there, several years since, I restored some of the windows, which had been plastered over, when the mullions of the others were destroyed for the purpose of introducing modern sash windows; the taste, I conclude, of Mr. Saunders, who seems to have spared neither labour nor

expense to do all the mischief he could possibly effect. The windows thus restored had a beautiful appearance. The ceiling was modern, being somewhat vaulted, but broken in the curve by a moulding, and then becoming flat. As it was much decayed, it was taken down, when the original roof became visible, but so little of it remained, that I dared not recommend the restoration, but contented myself with giving it an uninterrupted curve. The wood work, as well as I recollect, was of a trefoil form, elegantly but not very richly carved *."

The following account of the parish church I copy from Mr. Bray's manuscript notes, and from my brother's "Historical Notices of Tavistock Abbey" in the Gentleman's Magazine.

"The parish church," says the latter, "is dedicated to St. Eustace, and was erected within the cemetery of the abbey church. Leland thought it had not been built long before the dissolution, and that the parishioners had previously a place of worship within the abbey church; this indeed was not unlikely, as other examples might readily be adduced to show. The parish church of Tavistock was, however, certainly in existence in the reign of Richard II., and how much earlier I have not discovered: it appears to have been under repair

* It is of some importance, in investigating the ruins of abbeys, to know where to look for the sites of particular offices. Whitaker's account is factitious. Our authors (Hist. of Shrewsbury) place them as follows:—

Dormitory.—Mostly, but not always, on the west side of the cloister.

Refectory.—Generally on the side of the cloister opposite to the church, and parallel with it.

Chapter House.—Always on the eastern side of the cloister.

Abbot's Lodging.—South-east of the church, though not invariably so.—*Gentleman's Magazine*, Nov. 1826.

in 1386. The exterior view exhibits a dark, lofty tower, under which is an archway forming a passage from the abbey precinct into the town; four distinct roofs, extending from the tower at the west to the termination of the building, indicate a spacious interior. Among the documents to which I had access in 1827, I found and deciphered the following very early churchwarden's account of the ninth year of Richard II. I shall give an extract from it on account of the curious items it contains: among these will be found a charge for collecting rushes for strewing the church against the feast of John the Baptist, and the anniversary of the dedication; for the expenses of a man and horse sent to buy wax at Plymouth for lights in the church; charges for materials for repairing windows, &c.; for making three painted figures in the window of the vestry; for fuel; for shutters to the great east window; for the bringing a mason to repair the said window; for drinkings to the workmen employed on the above; rents from the park of Trewelake for maintaining lights at the altars of St. Nicholas, St. Stephen, St. John the Baptist, St. Katharine; payments made to the sacrist of the parish church for offerings to the respective altars therein; to the notary, for drawing the account, &c.*"

*Tavystoke. S. Compu's custod'. hujus eccli'e beati Eustachii Tavistock a festo Invenc'o'is s'c'e crucis sub anno d'ni millo cccmo. octogesimo usq' ad id'm tu'c p'x'mẽ sequ' ann' d'm' millo cccmo. lxxxvito.

Empcio ceræ. Idem comput. in cxl. lib. ceræ emptis hoc anno lvis. xd. custos et Repa'cio Ecclie. Idem computat' in cirpis colligend' con'. festum s'c'i Johis' baptistæ ivd. In die dedicac' ois eccl'ie—In bokeram emptis in repac'o'e vestementor'—In conduco'e unius viri ceram emere apud Plymouth et unius equi expens. Suis ibidem viiid.

The paintings which formed the subject of the engraving that appeared in the *Gentleman's Maga-*

In quar'tio calcis (lime) empt xv$^{d.}$—In earriag. d'ce v —Carreragio lapid iv$^{d.}$ (carriage of stones)—In vet. vit. (old glass) empt. iii*s.* v$^{d.}$—I repac'oe unius fenestræ vitre. in fine ecc'lie ii*s.* iiii$^{d.}$—In vi. pedibus novi vitri empt. vii*s.*—In focalibus (fuel) empt. ii$^{d.}$—In lviij. lib. plumbi empt. iv*s.* x. ob—In vii. lib. stanni empt. xviii$^{d.}$—In conduco'e unius machionis (mason) ad d'c'am fenestram reparand—In factura trium ymaginum in fenesti in vestiario xii$^{d.}$—I' repa'coe trium claterium (shutters) ad magnam fenestram in fine eccl'ie vi$^{d.}$—In cibo et potu vi$^{d.}$—In libera ad opus fenest' iii$^{d.}$ ad campanas xii$^{d.}$ (for bell-ringing) —In rasina (resin) empt. in fatura 11 (torches)—In 1 parva corda pro velo—In v. verg (yards) panni linei ad unum rochetum—In factura ejusd. rocheti vi$^{d.}$—In factura unius cartæ vi$^{d.}$—In libitina (a bier) empt. viii—In repa'coe vestimentorum p. a'. vi$^{d.}$—In vestimentis lavandis p. a' vi$^{d.}$ Item. ad cap. redditis parci de trewelake xvi$^{d.}$ Et diversis altaribus eccl'ie p'd'ce de redds. p'ci. pd'ci. viz. ad lumen sci nichi iii$^{d.}$ ad lumen sc'i Ste'phi iii$^{d.}$ ad lumen sci Joh. baptiste iii$^{d.}$ ad lumen sce Katerine iii$^{d.}$—In clerico scribent. compot. xii$^{d.}$—In emendacoe fenest ii$^{d.}$—In pergamino (parchment) empto ii$^{d.}$

[The sum total of these expenses, of which I have only given extracts, is 3*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.*; then follows :]

Liberacio denar'—Idem computat' in liba'colo sacristæ monasterii de Tavystocke pro oblacione perveniente ad altaria ecclesie parochialis predictæ iii*s.* iv$^{d.}$ per ann—Pro altari sce Marie apud la south dor vi*s.* viij$^{d.}$ a festo invencionis sce crucis usque ad idem festum tunc proxime sequent'. Pro altari Sci Eustace xii$^{d.}$ per a. pro altari scæ Katerinæ xii$^{d.}$ pro altari sci blasii iv$^{d.}$ p'altari sci Johis Baptist vi$^{d.}$ pro altari sce Trinitatis vi$^{d.}$ d. altari sci Georgii iv$^{d.}$ pro altari sci Salvatoris in capella Joh. dabernoun iv$^{d.}$

[The account is subscribed "per me cleric" by the notary, who, I suspect, was a wag, as, instead of his signature, he affixes his notarial mark; a head with an extraordinary long nose (perhaps this was intended for his own portrait), having a quill stuck on the forehead by way of plume. Subjoined to the account is this postscript.]

Sepum (tallow) pro mortario (a light burning at the shrines or tombs of the dead)—de xxxiv. lib. sepi de empeione hoc ann. Thesaurus ecc'lie. Idem R. de cupacum cuverculo (cup and cover) argento et duobus angelis de auratis tenent. vit. clan. corpus. d' m'cum (two gilt angels holding the body of our Lord enclosed in glass); et de iv calices cum patenis argent. Et duobus cruetis (silver cruets) et de 1 pixide argenteo pro corpore x*s.* summa pat. Et reman I cupa cum cuverculo, iv. calices cum patenis 2 cruet' cum pixide argenteo.

zine (February, 1830) were the next relics in point of antiquity appertaining to the church of St. Eustace. The panels are two feet eleven inches in height, the longer piece four feet in length, the shorter about two feet; the figures are canopied by the most tasteful and elegant carved Gothic foliage; the mouldings which divided them no longer remain, but their situation is readily observed by the vacant spaces between the figures, and those who have a knowledge of the Gothic style of architecture and ornament will easily supply them. The first figure to the left hand is the martyred Stephen, his hands uplifted, and his head surrounded by a nimbus of glory, the distinguishing emblem of saints; the next figure is St. Lawrence holding the instrument of his martyrdom, the gridiron. These are all that remain of a series of saints which were probably at least nine in number, to correspond with the nine grades of the angelic hierarchy, which are distinguished with wings; of the latter remain the personifications of the Archangeli, Cherubim, Potestates, and a fourth with the crown and sceptre, the inscription of which was probably Principatus.* The style of the armour

* The five other grades were—Throni, Angeli, Seraphim, Dominatus, and Virtutes. All nine are represented in a window in St. Neot's Church, Cornwall (see Hedgeland's prints), and doubtless it was these nine orders which were painted on the Romsey altar-piece. To this order of marshalling the heavenly host, derived by early Christian writers from the Bible and the traditions of the Jews, Milton has frequently alluded. He makes both the Saviour of mankind and Satan address them in the fifth book of Paradise Lost,—

"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers."

And in the tenth is the following passage:

"———— him Thrones and Powers,
Princedoms and Dominations ministrant,
Accompanied to Heaven gate."

worn by one of the figures fixes the age of the painting at about the time of Henry VI. I believe that the whole of these figures must have adorned compartments of the rood-loft in the parish church, which was doubtless erected over the opening from the church into the chancel, supporting the figure of our blessed Saviour on the cross, and of his mother and John, the disciple whom he loved, standing by.

The mysterious meaning of this arrangement was as follows: The body of the church typified the church militant on earth, the chancel the church triumphant in heaven; and all who would attain to a place in the latter must pass under the *rood;* that is, take up the cross, and then follow their great Captain through trials and afflictions. A veil or curtain was drawn over the rood and the figures attached to it, when the services of the church in which they were exhibited were completed. This explains the charge in the preceding account, "of a little cord for the vail."*

The next parochial document appertaining to the church of St. Eustace, which I shall here notice, is headed as follows. "The account of Thomas Holes and John Collyn, wardens of the churche of Tavistock ffrom the thirde of Maye in the yere of our Lorde Godd one thousande ffyve hundred ffower schore and eight, until the third day of Maye in the yere of our Lorde Godd one thousande ffyve hundred ffower score and nyne, that is to weete for one whole yere ——"—from which I extract the following items:

* Sold a rod of iron which the curtain run upon before the rood A. D. 1549—3 Edward VI. See Fuller's History of Waltham Abbey.

"Receipts for the buryalle and belle."*

"Imprimis, the same accomptants doe charge themselves with the receipt of iv^{d}. ffor the greate bell, upon the deathe of Margarett the daughter of Roger Dollyn."

"Item — Receaved upon the deathe of Agnes Drake, for all the bells and her grave, viis. iv^{d}.

"Receaved of the p'shers (parishioners) of Tavystock towardes a rate made for the setting fforth of souldyers for the guardynge of the Queen's ma'tie's p'son, and towardes the mayntenaunce of the churche this yere, as appeareth by a book of p'ticulars thereof, xxxli. xs. iv^{d}."

A large portion of this charge was doubtless for the musters of 1588, the year of the Armada.

"Item. Gave Mr. Bickell, Mr. Battishill, Mr. Knightes, and other preachers who preached at s'vall times in this p'ishe churche this yere (1588) ivs. viii^{d}. —Item, paide for wyne and bread this yere for the comunyon table, lixs iii^{d}.—Item, paide John Drake the schole master, for teachinge in the gramer schole this yere, xii li.—Item, paide to Nicholas Watts for wages for teachinge of the little children this yere, iiij li.—Item, paide at the muster in August last past, xls.—Item, paide by Mr Ffytz his comaundement the xvi of June, 1588, unto a collector having the Queene's greate seale to collect with, vi^{d}—Item, paide for a rope for one of the bells, xviij^{d}.—Item, paide in August for the expenses of the soldiers at Plympton, viis.—Item, paide to John Burges, for his paynes in going with the *Thrum* (the town drum)

* This shows that the expressions used by Shakspeare in his Hamlet, "the bringing home of *bell and burial*," were in the current form of his day.—Vide Hamlet, Act V., Scene 1st.

vi^{d}.—Item, paid the 6th of August and the 8th of August last past, to Mr Ffytz of the moneyes collected at the last rate xvii li—Item, paide the 18 August last, to Richard Drake, towardes the charge of the tynners, vi li.—Item, paide James the cutler for makynge cleane strappyne and other trymmynge for the corselett and other armour of the parishe, and for a new dagger, vi*s.*—Item, paide for a new girdell, xvi^{d}.—Item, paide for a booke of articles at the firste visitac'on and for ffees then xxii^{d}—Item, for writing the presentments * at the visitac'on and lyninge in thereof xii^{d}—Item, paide for the expenses of the wardens, sydemen, clarkes, and others of the p'ishe at dynner that day, vi*s.* vi^{d}—Item, paide Thomas Watts for amendinge of the Bible and the Booke of Co'mon Prayer, beinge tornen in dyvers places, ii*s.* ii^{d}—Item, paide for the expenses of the constable, Mr Mohan, and of John Collyn, one of the wardens, and of Stephen Hamblyn and of the Constable's man at Plympton, beinge then at the assessinge of the subsidis, the xth of Septr 1588, iii*s.* i^{d}—Item, paide to one that collected with the broade seale, the 20th October last vi^{d}.

"Item, paide to three Iryshemen, which hadd a lycence from the Earell (Earl) of Bath, vi^{d}. To a poore man that collected for the hospital of Saynt Leonard's vi^{d}.

"Paide the paver for amendinge the pavement by the conduytts and the street by the higher Churche bowe xxvii^{d}.

"William Gaye for killing of eight ffoxes this yere viii.*s.*†

* Of Recusants refusing to attend the common prayer.

† The reward for the destruction of a fox was increased about a cen-

"Item, paide for a chayne and settinge in thereof, for the fastenynge of the dictionarrie in the Schole howse ix^{d}.*

"Item, paide Walter Burges for one planke and nayles, amendinge of the Widdow Nicholls and Walter Poynter's wyfe's seate and other seates vii^{d}. Item, paide him for coveringe of six graves in the churche this yere xviii^{d}. Item, paide him for washinge of the churche clothes, viii^{d}.

"Item, for wrytinge this accompt and the accompt of the Alms-house landes, vi.*s.* viii^{d}.

"Bestowed on Mr. Moore the preacher for his expence, xxii^{d}."

From a churchwarden's book, beginning 1661, I extract the following curious entries:

"Briefs in our parish as follow—

"29th April, 1660. Collected for a company going to New England, taken by the Ostenders, 6*s.* 6^{d}."

"September 16th, 1666. Collected towardes the reliefe of the present poore distressed people of the towne and University of Cambridge."

"October 11th, 1666. Collected towardes the

tury after this time, more than threefold, as appears from the following entry: "May 18th, 1673. This day it was agreed by the masters and inhabitants of the towne and parish of Tavystoke, that whosoever shall kill any ffox within the said parish, shall receive for his or their paynes in so doing, the sum of three shillings and four pence." *Churchwarden's Book*, 1660 to 1740.

* This is an amusing charge, and shows the scarcity of lexicographic tomes in that day. The reader will remember to have seen, in many parish churches, the black letter Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs, similarly attached, *pro bono publico*," "to a chayne." Erasmus's 'Paraphrase on the Gospels' remains at the present time thus secured in Tavistock Church, the original cost of which, according to an item in another account, was fifteen shillings.

reliefe of the poore inhabitants of London, who have lately suffered by the lamentable fire 11*l.* 5*s.* 9½d."

"Febry. 21st, 1668. Collected the day above written of the towne and parishe of Tavystocke towardes the reliefe and redemption of severall persons now slaves to the Turkes in Algiers and Sallay and other places 1*l.* 2*s.* 1½d."

"1670, 21st, 22d, 23d, 24th November. Collected towardes the redemption of the present captives in Turkey, in the towne and parishe of Tavystoke."

The list consists of upwards of seven hundred contributors. Amount of contribution 16*l.* 0*s.* 9½d.*

"12th July, 1674. Collected then the summe of 1*l.* 3*s.* 4¼d. for the fire of St. Martins in the fields, in the County of Middlesex."

"9th May, 1675. Collected then for John Forslett of Thilbroke, in the County of Cornwall, a poor captive in Ffez under the Turkes, 1*l.* 10*s.* 1½d."

"24th April, 1675. For the fire at Redburne, in the County of Hereford, 6*s.* 6d."

"March 19th, 1675. To a petition for John Lawes, a captive in Tituan, 9*s.* 3d."

"13th September, 1677. For the fire at St. Saviours and St. Thomas, in the County of Surrey, 27*s.* 9d."

"27th October. For James Cole of Totness, a captive in Argier, 17*s.* 7½d."

* At the head of this list is the Honourable Lady Marie Howard, ten shillings. She was the Lady Howard to this day so much the theme of tradition, and of whom so many wild stories are told. Some notice of her life will hereafter be given in these letters. George Howard, Esq. gave six shillings, and eight servants, nine shillings.

"1680, August. Another general collection for redemption of the present captives in Turkey, amounting to 6*l.* 18*s.* 5^{d}."

"1681, November. Another, towardes the present subsistence and reliefe of the distressed Protestants of Ffrance 6*l.* 12*s.* 3¼^{d}."

"27th September, 1683. Paide and layd out to one M^{s}. Mary Danevaux fowre shillings for her charges in going to her friendes having a greate losse among nine fammilyes in the towne of Mumby, in the County of Lincoln, having seen her petition under the hands and seales of the Justices of Peace of that County, Somerset, and Devon, to testifie it. The summe is 1400*l.*, she lost by a breache of the tyde-storme that violently destroyed heare howeses and goodes, and her husbande was lost in savinge those goodes."

The "Captives in Turkey," who appear to have been very numerous, were prisoners to the rovers of Barbary, whose piratical depredations on the seas, in the reign of Charles II., were repressed with considerable difficulty by the outfit of several naval armaments against them.

The register of marriages, births, baptisms and deaths is not extant at Tavistock earlier than the year 1614; but the Rev. Mr. Carpenter, of South Sydenham Damerell, in that neighbourhood, showed me the register of his church, beginning A.D. 1539. I apprehend this is as early a register as any extant; for in the year 1538, says Stow, "in the moneth of September, Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seale, Vicegerent to the King's Highness, sent forth intimations to all bishops and curates through the

realme, charging them to see that in everie Parish Churche, the Bible of the largest volume printed in English were placed for all men to reade on (secured, no doubt, like the dictionary of the Grammar School at Tavistock, and the Martyrology, in many churches, by 'a chayne'), and that a book of *Register* were also provided and kept in every Parish Church, wherein shall be written every wedding, christning, and burying within the same Parish for ever."

The various heads of the Sydenham Register are preceded by certain texts of Scripture, as the baptismal entries by "whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire, &c. &c."

Having given the above very copious extracts from my brother's notices of our church, and the curious churchwarden's accounts (which he took the pains most minutely to examine), I shall subjoin a few observations from Mr. Bray's MS. notes in continuation; and then conclude this letter, which may be considered as one addressed to you more in your character of an antiquary than a poet; but the subjects, however recondite, belong so much to the history of this place, they ought not to be omitted.

Of the Church itself, Mr. Bray says, "it consists of a nave with an aisle on each side, and a shorter one, probably additional, to the south, extending only to the chancel. This latter aisle, it has been supposed, was not carried on to the end of the chancel on account of Judge Glanville's monument, which is on that side of it. But by the carved woodwork of the ceiling, it appears to be of a more ancient date than the rest of the church. The pil-

lars, also, have capitals enriched with leaves, whilst the others are plain. But the tracery of the windows is less ornamented than those to the north. However, the windows, in their general form, are the same; consisting of pointed but depressed arches. The tower, which is at the west end (though, strictly speaking, the whole of the building varies considerably from the cardinal points), is supported on four arches. Through two of these was the passage from the abbey precincts into the town, at a spot still called Church Bow, though the arch that gave name to it has recently being taken down.

"By removing a row of old houses a few years since, the north side of the church has been opened to the street, and adds not a little to its embellishment.

"The churchyard, from the deep funereal shade of a number of large yew trees, was formerly remarkably gloomy. In addition to which it was so solitary, that few, after night-fall, could be induced to enter it. But the fears of superstition have long since fled, and a callous indifference to the sacredness of the spot seemed to have succeeded. It is now not only one of the most public thoroughfares in the place by night as well as by day; but even children, by running over the graves, at play, prevent the very turf from covering the mould. This wanton violation of common decency, it is hoped, requires only to be noticed to be suppressed *.

"But the feelings of those who venerate the dead

* It *is* suppressed, for not very long after the above note was written, the churchyard was surrounded by an iron railing and planted with lime-trees on three of its sides. It is now wholly undisturbed, and kept with all care from intrusion.

must have been more greatly shocked when, some years since, the turnpike road was cut through the churchyard, when the coffins and bones of deceased relatives and friends were seen not only exposed to the eye of day, but almost trampled on by the feet of men, and even of horses.

"In the tower of the church, which is plain and simple, but lofty, are eight bells. They were given by the Duke of Bedford, who left it to the inhabitants of the place, whether they would have an organ or bells, and they chose the latter.* Formerly there were only five, which seems to have been the general number in country towns. When the poor were buried, no bell was tolled, even in an age when the tolling of a bell was thought to assist the departure of the soul to heaven, till some good old lady, whose name has unfortunately perished, gave one for the express purpose; and it was ever after called the poor-bell. Since they have been increased to eight, that, among the rest, was removed and probably melted; but the third bell still retains the name, and is applied to the same purpose.

"The singular custom existed here, till lately, of the sexton's carrying his spade, not shouldered, but, to use the military phrase, reversed, before the clergyman at every funeral. But this ceremony of the church militant here on earth is now dispensed with.

"About forty years ago, a melancholy instance of the effects of superstitious credulity happened here. Two brothers of the name of Luggar sat up one

* The Duke of Bedford has since given a very handsome and fine-toned organ to the church.

Midsummer-eve, in the church porch, from an idea (founded on ancient custom) that if at twelve o'clock at night they looked through the key-hole of the door, they would see all those who were to die that year walk into the church from the opposite doorway. Their imagination was so worked up that they fancied they saw *themselves* in this funereal procession. Certain it is that they both died within a very short space of time afterwards; were both buried in the same grave; and the inhabitants, by having the bells muffled at their funeral, testified a more than ordinary commiseration of their awful fate.*

"In the chancel is a monument to the memory of one of the Fitz family; which, according to Prince, 'is known by tradition more than inscription, no epitaph being found thereon.' But though there is no inscription on the monument itself, on a flat stone in the pavement beneath may be distinguished the following words among others that are obliterated:—'Here lyeth John Fytz of Fytz-ford, Esquier,' with the date of 1539, or 1559: the third figure of the date being much worn, it cannot clearly be distinguished.

"Prince describes the arms of Fitz as 'argent a cross gules guttee de sang.' The arms on the canopy of the present monument do not exactly answer this description; but they have so near a resemblance that it is probable Prince may have been mistaken. They are a cross *engrailled* with five gouttes de sang on each quarter. These are on the right of the canopy; on the left are three rams; and, in front,

* This melancholy circumstance of the death of the Luggars suggested the ballad of 'Midsummer Eve,' written by Mr. Bray, and inserted in my novel of 'Fitz of Fitz-ford.'

the above coats of arms are quartered with others: the crest is a centaur. Beneath the canopy, which is supported by four columns, lies the figure of a knight in armour, with a lady by his side; the former resting his feet on a lion, the latter on a lamb. At the back of the monument, against the wall, a youth, probably their son, is represented kneeling, with a book before him on a desk. Some have supposed this youthful figure to be the effigy of Sir John Fitz, of whom so remarkable a story is told by Prince, and who fell on his own sword*. It may be such, though we have no authority, either written or traditional, to warrant the assertion.

"On the opposite side of the chancel is the monument of Judge Glanville. Prince tells us it is 'a very fair monument, so lively representing his person, in his scarlet robes, that some, at their first entrance into one of the doors there, (against which it stands,) have been surprised at the sight, supposing it had been living.' It is certainly very characteristic; and I have no doubt, (from its resemblance to a picture of the Judge, once in my father's possession,) was a striking likeness. Altogether it is one of the finest monuments I have ever seen of the Elizabethan age. His lady, Alicia, is kneeling before him, surrounded by their seven children, all of the same diminutive size, as if they were brought forth at a birth.

"Near it (of which, though now effaced, I once, when some whitewash peeled off, saw some vestiges,) was painted against the wall, as an honorary monument, Queen Elizabeth, lying under a canopy,

* The story, as related by Prince, will be given in a future letter.

with the following inscription, which is preserved by Prince—

If ever royal vertues crown'd a crown,
If ever mildness shined in majesty,
If ever honour honoured renown,
If ever courage dwelt with courtesy,
If ever princess put all princes down
For temperance, prowess, prudence, equity,
This! this was she, that in despight of death
Lives still ador'd, admired Elizabeth:
Spain's rod, Rome's ruin, Netherland's relief,
Heaven's gem, earth's joy, world's wonder, nature's chief.

"In the chancel also is a slab on the pavement, dated 1740, to the memory of one of the Manatons, who, subsequently to the Glanvilles, were the possessors of Kilworthy.

"In the north aisle are the arms of an ancient family, with the following inscription—

Gladius Spiritus est verus clypeus.
Sub hoc lateat omnis tuta domus.

"Near it is a monument of one of the Fortescues, of Buckland Filleigh, which is principally curious from the blunders of the sculptor, who seems to have corrected the text by turning one letter into another and filling up the superfluous parts by a kind of composition which is now falling off, and renders some of the words difficult to be deciphered. On the same side is the upper part of an arched tomb, too mutilated to require further notice. In other parts of the church are two or three modern tablets, and an expensive monument lately erected by the late Mr. Carpenter, of Mount Tavy, to the memory of his father, and others of his family *.

* Another monument to the late Mrs. Carpenter has likewise been erected by her eldest son, John Carpenter, Esq., the present proprietor of Mount Tavy.

"The font, of an octagonal form, each side bearing a shield, is supported on a low pillar, with a base. The upper part is enclosed with a kind of wooden pyramid, surmounted by a pelican, bearing the date 1660. Around it is 'God save King Charles II.!' with the names of Alexander Gove, and John Noseworthy, churchwardens.

"On either side of the commandments, at the altar, is a border in the form of a pilaster, containing fruit and flowers beautifully carved. The figures of Moses and Aaron, as large as life, are painted in the compartments beyond, within the railing; they were executed about the time of George I., by a native of this place, named Beaumont, and, considering the state of the arts at that period, and that the artist was uneducated as a painter, they are a very respectable performance. The altar table is of oak, richly and beautifully carved in the Gothic style. The pulpit is of much later date, but handsome in its decoration. In the church is seen an iron-bound oak chest, most probably as old as the building itself; in this were found the ancient parish documents before noticed, which are so numerous and so curious, that I question if any parish in the kingdom can produce a more interesting collection of the like nature."

Having here given you Mr. Bray's account of the church, I shall conclude this letter with my brother's notice of

THE SAXON SCHOOL*.

"No mention of such an establishment is to be found among the muniments of the abbey; but Archbishop Parker refers to the existence of a Saxon school at Tavistock, and at many other monas-

* From "Notices of Tavistock and its Abbey."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1830.

teries within the realm, as a matter in the memory of persons of his time. He says that many of the charters and muniments of the early times being written in the Saxon tongue, these foundations were provided in order to communicate the knowledge of it from age to age, lest it should at length become totally obsolete. It is probable that the Saxon school shared the fate of its fostering parent, the monastery, at the time of the Reformation, or that it merged in the grammar school still existing at Tavistock, to which no date of foundation can be assigned. Indeed it is not likely that so eminent a monastery as Tavistock had neglected to establish a school for the instruction of the children of the poor in Latin and church music; the mode in that day of providing that there should always be a number of persons qualified for the priesthood. The grammar school at Tavistock is at the present time very slenderly attended, there seldom being more than one or two scholars on its list. The schoolmaster instructs them in Latin and Greek, and the steward of the Duke of Bedford sends as many scholars (in the name of the Duke) as he chooses; each boy paying two guineas entrance money, and one guinea annually to the master. Some particulars of the master's stipend in the time of Elizabeth will be found in a subsequent document.

"THE PRINTING PRESS.

"The noble art of printing (continues my brother) was communicated to our land about the year 1471, and being first practised in Westminster Abbey, the example was soon followed by St. Augustine's, Canterbury, St. Alban's, and 'other monasteries of England,' says Stow. Among which number was

the Abbey of Tavistock. Certain it is, that a translation of 'Boëtius de Consolatione Philosophiæ,' undertaken at the instance of one Elizabeth Berkeley, and completed by John Walton, Canon of Osney, in 1410, was printed at Tavistock, in 1524 *, under the editorship of Dan Thomas Rychard, one of the monks, who, by his prefix of *Dan* or Dominus to his name, was perhaps a graduate of the university, or a scholar of some note. It might, however, be a distinction added on account of the office which he bore in the monastery; for I take him to be the same person who signs his name to the surrender, 'Rycardus custos.' The conclusion of this book (so rare that Hearne had only seen two imperfect copies of it) has the following note:—

"'Here endeth the boke of comfort called in Latyn Boecius de Consolatione Phi'e, emprinted in the exempt monastery of Tavestock in Denshyre, by me Dan Thomas Richard Monke of the sayd monastery. To the instant desyer of the ryght worshypful esquyer Mayster Robert Langdon. Anno d. M.D. XXV. Deo Gracias †.'

"Robert Langdon, LL.D., was nephew to Bishop Langdon, a great patron of literature, and I suppose had imbibed something of his uncle's spirit."

I have the honour to remain,
My dear Sir,
Very respectfully and faithfully yours,
ANNA E. BRAY.

* The charter of the Tinners of Devon, small quarto, was also printed at Tavistock Abbey, 1534; and the Long Grammar, containing only sixteen pages, edited by Richards.

† "A copy of this book was purchased by Dr. Askew, at Mr. West's sale, for three pounds. At Dr. Askew's sale, it was bought by Mr. Mason, for five pounds: it would, if sold now, produce four times as much."—Beloe's 'Anecdotes of Literature.'

LETTER XXVII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—A garden—The love of it common with amiable persons—Nature contemplated generally, a subject of constant benefit and delight—Its variety and interest—By whom sought—Examples cited in ancient and modern times—A passage from St. Chrysostom—Cottage gardens; their beauty in Devon—The general character of a Devonshire cottage—Spenser's lines on the Butterfly—Great men who have been noted for their love of nature, and rural pleasures and occupations—The Vicarage garden described—The still house—Abbey walls; its boundary—The orchard—St. John's—Romanized-British sepulchral stones—Two of them in the Vicarage garden—Blackbird's nest—Birds—A remarkable cat; a feat of hers related—The storm—Thrush—Swallows—Inscriptions—Betsey Grimbal's Tower—Cleopatra's Needle—Little Bridge—Second division of the garden—The Long Walk—A wood dove that built its nest in the old tower—Lines upon it—A Laurestina planted by the mother of the writer; a sacred memorial—Crowndale; birth-place of Drake; way to it—The old parish clerk; his favourite walk—Remarkable character of this worthy person—A sketch of him attempted—His good sense—His early life and exemplary conduct—His observations on various subjects, moral and religious—The valley of Crowndale, and the walk to it described—The house in which Drake was born taken down—Proposed inscription to Drake—Crowndale; origin of its name—Witchcraft—Ancient game of Kales—Tradition respecting Sir Francis Drake and the fire-ships—Another legend concerning him—Shooting the gulf—Tradition of his wife about being married during his absence—Tale of Sir Francis and the ship-boy—Another legend—Extract from a letter of Mr. Southey sent to the writer in reply to the above.

Vicarage, Tavistock, September 7, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have often observed in life that the most happy and contented minds, the most amiable and

gentle dispositions, have been found in persons who take peculiar delight in a garden, or in contemplating, on a larger scale, the boundless beauties and wonders of creation. It is a theme, though often touched upon, never to be exhausted, because the subject has God for its origin and its end. Nay, God himself delights in his own works, for he saw that "they were good." The prophets of old continually allude to them; and amongst the heaviest curses of the lamentable fall of Moab was, "that the waters should be bitter, the grass fail, and that there should be no green thing." And Job enumerates the wonders of God's works from the highest to the least; from that power which "hangeth the earth upon nothing," and "openeth out the north on the empty place," which "maketh a way for the lightning of the thunder," to the mercy which sends the "small drops of rain, that cause the bud of the tender herb to shoot." And holy David, in the 148th Psalm, enumerates all "planets, the greater and lesser light; the fire, the hail, the snow and vapour, hills and mountains and fruitful trees, and all cedars," as giving praise to God.

To look, therefore, on the creation with an eye of interest and feeling must be ever acceptable to the Creator. To trace out the several properties of his works, and to study with humility and diligence their laws, their uses and operations, is an employment worthy the immortal mind of man; since it is one of those studies which we may reasonably hope will survive and become enlarged beyond the grave, when we shall have shaken off this "mortal coil:" when we shall no longer see through a "glass darkly," what wonders of creation, spiritual as well

as material, may unfold themselves to our view! But if we pass through this world, as the slumberer does through the night, unconscious of what lies around us, how can we be assured that those excellent things will delight us in futurity, of which we had no perception in our preparatory state? These, it must be admitted, are speculative notions, but they may be true; and they are certainly harmless—we may hope, therefore, they may be indulged.

The wisdom of Providence is seldom, in any one thing, confined in its operations to the mere term of our mortal career; and in placing us in a world so diversified, so beautiful in its forms as well as useful in their properties, there is something which seems to tell us that Nature does not court our admiration, or invite our inquiry into her most hidden secrets in vain; and all would be vain if it ended with the grave. There is, indeed, in most things a constant connexion or figure between mortal and immortal. What, for instance, to advert to the most obvious, is that regular succession of day and night, but a lively image of death and the renewal of our being? What the sun, which of all celestial bodies is to us the most glorious, but an emblem of Him who is the fountain of all light? And when that great luminary "leaves the world to darkness," what but the assured power of God (whose laws never vary nor know the shadow of change) can certify it will ever rise on us again? As glorious as is our hope in Christ, so certain will be its fulfilment. Still further, to draw the parallel, it may be added that it is by the light of the sun we discover all the endless variety of substances, and of their colours that robe the earth as with a mantle of beauty, which

God changes as the seasons vary in their order and their kind. The light he has given us by revelation is, in the moral, like this luminary in the physical world—it shows us all the beauty of the divine law, and where the everlasting fountains may be sought which refresh the soul, even should it "be weary unto death."

The contemplation of nature continually suggests thoughts like these; and never, I should hope, can do other than lead the mind to a conviction of the power and the excellence of the Almighty, without which, knowledge is useless, and inquiry vain: since it produces no fruit but that which, as the gourd of Jonah, withers in a day. How instructive, for example, is it in all seasons to consider the progress of the vegetable and the animal world! Winter, that season of inactivity and barrenness to the eye, we find teeming with the hidden operations of nature; for then the snows, which cover the face of the earth with their chilling aspect, are, in fact, like that which clothes the flocks, a mantle affording a covering to the plants as they nestle beneath it: and the bare and leafless tree abounds with vitality. And how admirable is that wisdom which guards its works against the dangerous transition of passing from one extreme in the seasons to the other! The fluctuating spring, which not too suddenly makes us forget the winter, yet prepares the earth by milder warmth for the summer's ardent suns; and the fall of the year, when the harvest is complete, that leads us, like the decline of life, by gentle steps to the winter, and enables us to meet its attendant severities of storms and biting frosts, are all instances of the merciful order and government of Providence.

There is a beautiful passage in St. Chrysostom which is so in harmony with this subject, that I cannot forbear to quote it, in the very words in which I heard it, as introduced in a discourse from the pulpit: "As the water, which descends from Heaven nourishes and vivifies, and though it be of *one* kind, operates in various ways; is snow-white in the lily, but sable in the narcissus, blushes in the rose, is purple in the violet, is sweet in the fig, but bitter in the wormwood: so also the Divine Spirit, which descends from Heaven, nourishes and vivifies the soul, and though of one kind, exerts its power and efficacy in various ways."

I have ventured to give these remarks as introductory to a very favourite subject of mine—the many benefits that result to us from cultivating a taste not only for nature at large, but for a garden. A taste for gardening is more marked in the English perhaps, than in any other nation. We see it not merely in the educated and higher classes, but with the poorest of the peasantry. How many a cottage, whose want even of the most ordinary conveniences of life bespeaks the needy condition of its inmate, possesses a character of cheerfulness and comfort by the woodbine that twines round the ruinous porch, the rose-bush that creeps in upon the lattice, or the stately hollyhock and the gorgeous sun-flower that deck the slip of ground before his door—flowers which, like noble persons in their progress through the world, plant them wherever it may be, near the palace or the cottage, lose nothing of the dignity inherent in their nature, and rather give it to their station than derive it thence.

I know not any county in England where this

taste for a garden with the peasantry is more universal than in the west. A Devonshire cottage, if not too modern, is the sweetest object that the poet, the artist, or the lover of the romantic could desire to see. The walls, generally of stone, are grey, and if not whitewashed, (which they too often are,) abound with lichen, stone-crop, or moss. Many of these dwellings are ancient, principally of the Tudor age, with the square-headed mullioned and labelled windows. The roof is always of thatch, and no cottage but has its ivy, its jessamine, or its rose mantling its sides and creeping on its top. A bird-cage at the door is often the delight of the children; and the little garden, besides its complement of hollyhocks, &c., has a bed or two of flowers before the house of the most brilliant colours. A bee-hive, and the elder, that most useful of all domestic trees, are seen near the entrance; and more than once have I stopped to observe the eagerness and the delight with which the children amuse themselves in chasing a butterfly from flower to flower. A butterfly is the favourite of infancy, and affords a subject for reflection even to age. The change it undergoes would puzzle a philosopher did he attempt to explain the laws of its ephemeral being; and wherefore a supine and ugly grub, that lies in darkness, should change into a creature with vibrating wings, ever restless, ever sporting in light and sun, and whose brief existence seems to realize the notions of Epicurus, in being devoted to pleasure. Who has ever described a butterfly like our Spenser in those lines of matchless beauty?

> The velvet nap which on his wings doth lie,
> The silken downe with which his backe is dight,

His broad outstretched hornes, his hayrie thies,
His glorious colours and his glistering eies.

Those who delight in sacred studies can never forget that a garden was the first possession bestowed on man whilst he was in a state of innocence. There, by the forfeiture of his obedience, he became subject to mortality. And in a garden, too, stood the sepulchre, whence came his assurance, by the resurrection of our Lord, of his immortality. Even the heathen world of antiquity affords us examples of how many great and wise men delighted in the culture of a particular spot of earth. The admirable Numa left with reluctance his garden and his retirement at Cures, (where, says Plutarch, he gave his hours to the worship of the gods, to his friends, and dressing the ground, and feeding cattle,) to become the king of Rome. Cincinnatus was taken from the plough to be a Dictator. "And the sublime imagination of Plato," says an eloquent modern writer *, "still required him to seek God amidst the pleasant haunts of a garden." It is recorded of Socrates, that he delighted in the beauties of the country, where, in a garden, he enjoyed sitting under the plane-tree, on the margin of a pure stream, to breathe the evening air. In ages of a more recent date, we have numerous examples of the best men who found in a garden a relaxation from the toils, and a solace for the cares of life. Renè, the afflicted and noble Count of Anjou, felt a melancholy pleasure in showing to his friends the flowers he had reared with his own hands. Fenelon, in such a spot, would pursue his walks of contemplation "in peace and silence before God." In our own country, how many

* Kenelm Digby, author of the "Broad Stone of Honour."

good men have evinced the same taste! How many great poets and writers have, like the bees around them, culled from the garden the choicest sweets, and stored them, as the flowers of song! The poem by Mason, on such a subject, can never be forgotten; for he was one

> Of those the favour'd few, whom Heav'n has lent
> The power to seize, select, and reunite
> Her loveliest features; and of these to form
> One archetype complete of sovereign grace *.

Cowley addressed a poem to Evelyn on the delight he took in his garden; and Evelyn was the first Englishman who brought its culture into a regular art; and left his work on Forest Trees as an invaluable legacy to posterity. Lord Bacon's fondness for horticulture is well known; and Shenstone's garden at the Leasowes was as celebrated as himself who formed it. And what a picture of beauty has Milton given in his description

> Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
> Now nearer, crowns with her inclosure green,
> As with a rural mound, the champaign head
> Of a steep wilderness; whose hairy sides
> With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
> Access denied: and overhead upgrew
> Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
> Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
> A sylvan scene! and as the ranks ascend
> Shade above shade, a woody theatre
> Of stateliest view.

To speak of a less lofty theme than that of Milton's Eden; a garden, such as we generally find in the country, is a world in miniature, and one that we may call our own. Its extent is not too large to prevent our becoming acquainted with every capa-

* Mason's Garden. Book the First.

bility of our domain. We may here form our colonies of plants and flowers, and see them rise and grow and thrive, like so many subjects obedient to our will; we may cherish or neglect them, and as we do the one or the other they will flourish or decline, whilst they are liable to no injuries but such as arise from causes beyond our control—the inclemency of the seasons, the winds, the blight, and the storm. It is not always necessary, though doubtless it enhances the pleasure, to be really a good gardener, in order to enjoy a garden. This I can truly say; for though I am not skilled in the horticultural art, yet I am not insensible to its value, and delight in our own spot of ground. At all seasons I find it replete with entertainment and variety; and truly is it a pretty picturesque appendage to the vicarage house, which stands in the midst; and my pleasure is enhanced by knowing that the garden was, in its present state, entirely planned, laid out, and planted by Mr. Bray, in a way to show to most advantage such ruins of the abbey as it contains, and to make a piece of ground of moderate size appear, by an ingenious exercise of art, a great deal larger than it is.

Another peculiarity is attached to it—it is not merely a summer-garden; since by planting a number of evergreens near the house, we have all the year round the satisfaction of looking upon verdure. These evergreens consist principally of laurels, bays, and hollies—the common and variegated—which, from the humidity and mildness of the climate, and the luxuriant way in which all vegetation grows in this neighbourhood, are now become not merely fine shrubs, but large and spreading trees. We have, also, the beautiful Portugal laurel, the cypress, the

juniper, and a most noble cedar of Lebanon; besides the Spanish chestnut, the common English horse chestnut, the sycamore, and the finest acacias.

The Spanish chestnut produces fine fruit, which we store for Christmas. At a particular time, when the tree is in blossom, the smell it emits is most disagreeable, something like that of rotten wood. If such is the case in Spain, where there are whole forests of these chestnuts, they must, I should think, be very unwholesome to all who live near, or travel through them.

Of ivy we have, perhaps, a little too much. Ours is the giant ivy, as it is called; it grows so fast that, without continual cutting and clearing, it intrudes more than it ought to do upon the architectural remains of the abbey, particularly the still-house, and Betsy Grimbal's tower, the two most distinguished ruins in our little domain; yet not so fine in themselves as the noble portion of the abbey walls, with their battlemented parapet that once formed the boundary of the abbot's, and now of the vicar's private gardens.

At no season of the year are these gardens other than beautiful. In the winter, when, now and then, they are covered with snow, the majestic cedar of Lebanon (which I can see from the windows where I am writing this letter) assumes the most elegant appearance: it looks light and feathery, and its branches wave, if there is the least wind, like a panache of white plumes on the helmet of a chivalrous knight equipped for the tourney. And the old towers with their heads buried in snow, whilst the lower parts, sheltered by the incumbent ivy, still show their dusky sides, remind one of the old monks

with a white cowl upon their heads. But I ought to take you more regularly through our garden; a very fit place for a poet, and especially for one who has sung of other lands as well as of our own; for here the laurels of Portugal and of England will literally wave above his brow.

The Athenians had a notion that the Muses would be gratified by having a temple dedicated to them on the banks of the river Ilissus; and so, according to the idea of Digby, the founders of the abbeys seemed to think that the saints to whom they dedicated them would be delighted by having all such edifices stationed on the banks of a river. Buckland, as well as Tavistock Abbey, stood amidst embowering woods on the margin of the beautiful Tavy; and though, in our immediate neighbourhood, the antique oaks, that in all probability saw the rise and progress of these monastic buildings, have long been swept away; yet we are not without wooded hills. For example, that called St. John's, where the hermitage once stood, is situated opposite to our garden on the other side the river. It is a romantic spot, where stands a rock, that still rears his head, like the tower of an old fortress, and looks down upon the Tavy, and upon the abbey's mouldering walls, with the same solemn front with which it beheld them when they were stormed by the Danes, or desecrated by the Reformationists. A wilderness of briars and brambles and old trees surround it; but there is a winding path that runs past its base and affords a very pleasing view of the town, the abbey bridge, &c., with the advantages derived from a rugged and picturesque foreground. We look directly upon St. John's; and the French windows of my favourite

room, where I love to sit and read and write, open into our garden. A lawn faces them, bordered with evergreens, of such luxuriant growth, that I call them my *grove*, and there is no extravagance in the expression.

To the west, and not more than seven or eight feet distant from one of the windows, stands, on the skirts of the lawn, one of those British, Romanized sepulchral stones, which Mr. Bray discovered and preserved; a particular account of which has been given by himself. This stone is of granite, and stands upright about eight feet above the earth. Against the back part of it some ivy was planted, which is now so thick and spreading, that it has assumed at the top an appearance somewhat resembling a judge's wig; this, which somewhat overshadows the inscription, would have been cleared away, but for the circumstance I am about to relate.

During the spring of the present year, I observed that between the hours of four and five in the afternoon, with the most exact regularity, as if ruled by a clock, several fine blackbirds assembled together on our lawn, amusing themselves with singing, chirping, and picking up worms. We took especial care not to disturb them, and at last they grew so bold, that they would sometimes hop and flutter even upon the gravel walk that runs close to the windows. At length we observed that a pair of them constantly returned to the judge's wig, where we soon found they had formed a nest in the ivy; and were bringing up a little family of vocalists to complete the numerous band of that description which have literally converted our garden into an aviary. I need not add we get no fruit. The blackbird is one of

the shyest in existence; and I am assured by the Rev. Mr. Johnes (the White of our neighbourhood), that a nest built by one of the race within a few feet of a parlour window, is a remarkable fact in natural history: here, therefore, I record it. We are, indeed, exceedingly musical; for the old walls, the ivy, the number of trees, and not allowing them to be disturbed, is altogether so agreeable and inviting to the feathered tribes, that we have them of all descriptions, and nearly all the year round. Our thrushes are numerous; and they will sit and sing upon the trees, sometimes in answer to each other, in the most delightful manner. We have also goldfinches, and bullfinches and green and all other finches that ever bore the name; and blackbobs, linnets, and martins, and the poor little wren *, and robin red-breasts out of number; and such a colony of sparrows have settled themselves in the ivy, that our man John says it grieves his heart to see how they eat up the peas after all his trouble of sowing and sticking. Guns are never allowed in our territory; and scarecrows are of no use with birds so gently treated. But one enemy they have in spite of all our endeavours to guard them; and that enemy is a certain favourite cat; one of the *smallest*, yet fiercest, and most beautiful of her kind; a very tigress in her nature.

Our proximity to the Tavistock canal, which unfortunately runs through our garden (for it is no ornament, being too much like a ditch), has brought

* "The golden-crested wren mentioned by Polwhele is probably the humming bird noticed by Martin, in the environs of Tavistock, who describes it as hanging its nest by a thread to the extreme bough of a tree."—*Monthly Review.*

upon us a number of rats; and this cat has been known to combat and slaughter many nearly as large as herself. She is, indeed, invaluable on account of the able manner in which she carries on the war against these vermin. But she seems determined to leave no victory within her reach unaccomplished; for she hunts birds almost as successfully as she does rats and mice; I have often met her growling with exultation, and slowly striding up towards the house with some luckless robin or finch in her mouth. Her mode of warfare, which I one day discovered by chance, showed great deliberation and fierceness. I observed her sitting under the branches, which grow near the ground, of the cedar of Lebanon; her body half hidden in the long grass, her fore feet drawn up, her head erect, and truly in the attitude of "cat-like watch." I saw at once that her eye was fixed on a pretty little greenfinch that was hopping on some bushes by the side of the canal. Not thinking she would commit murder in my sight; and, indeed, not fancying the bird was in any immediate danger, I amused myself with seeing what manœuvre she would practise next; when, to my extreme astonishment, the bird alighting but for an instant on the grass, she made one spring, and with so true an aim that the poor thing was dead before I could possibly interfere to save it: the feat was announced by a low growl; and trifling as this circumstance was, I could not help thinking it was a miniature representation of the spring, the fierceness and the power of the tiger. I took the bird from her, and scolded and beat her; but she seemed not to heed it; for she only turned away, drew up her back like an arch, raised and curled her tail, and

set off after another bird that caught her eye, without the delay of a moment.

We constantly hear in our garden that little watchman of the tempest, the storm-thrush: for whenever violent wind and rain come together, one or more of these will perch on the very topmost branches of an elm, the loftiest tree we have, and there will sit and pipe, rocking in the gale; and its note will sometimes seem to grow more loud and shrill as the winds blow stronger and higher. Swallows in abundance pay us a passing visit as they make their rapid evolutions in pursuit of the insect tribe; and after having been on the wing from sunrise to sun-down, we sometimes see them of an evening, hanging like bees on the pendant branches of the shrubs above the canal.

In going down the lawn, the still-house, an old tower where the monks distilled their medicines and sweet waters*, becomes the point of attraction; on returning, the vicarage and the shrubbery are seen in the foreground, backed by the tower of the church. And from no part of the grounds do we view any thing belonging to the town, excepting a few of the old buildings that keep up the character of antiquity afforded by the massive walls. I must not pass without notice another object, although a modern one, of some curiosity—it is the verandah before the drawing-room windows, which Mr. Bray erected after a design of his own. It now needs repair, as it was injured by the violent storms of a winter or two ago; but in this verandah, as well as in the external porch of the house, he has proved that the zigzag ornament so often seen in our churches of

* The Benedictine monasteries had always a school for medicine.

Saxon date was suggested by *wood work*. The frieze is formed in that fashion by small pieces of fir nailed together; and the rich brown colour of the bark of the wood, as well as the pattern, produces a beautiful effect. The festoons, which hang across the space left open in the verandah before the windows are composed of pine cones pierced and strung together upon wire, the same as those so much admired which surround the cottage near the sea in the delightful grounds of Mount Edgcumbe. The trellis work is enriched by the honey-suckle, the clematis, the pyrus japonica, and a spreading hydrangia, whose flowers are of the noblest growth. In no part of England are they, I believe, seen so large and beautiful as in Devonshire.

To the west of the house there is a walking shed, erected by Mr. Bray, and very similar to the verandah*; it is thatched; a boundary wall supports the roof; trees grow in front of it, and the ivy and shrubs render it a cool retreat from the summer's heat or shower. The following inscriptions were written by Mr. Bray for several parts of the garden. The second he cut himself on a slab of Devonshire slate, and placed it on the wall under the walking shed. The third, similarly cut, is on part of the abbey walls, where the noblest laurels and hollies form a natural arcade.

INSCRIPTION FOR A SEAT IN THE GARDEN, SUGGESTED BY THE NOTE ON GEN. ii. 8, IN MANT'S BIBLE.

The man with heavenly wisdom blest,
Seeks in a garden peace and rest,
And there, by worldly evils cross'd,
He finds "a Paradise unlost."

* Since writing this letter, in Sept. last, the verandah mentioned was found to be in so dangerous a state from dry rot, that it was obliged to be taken down.

INSCRIPTION UNDER THE WALKING SHED.

"From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade,"
Beneath this shed, my feeble hands have made,
May I *with God*, like holy *Enoch walk*,
As friend to friend, like Moses, hear him *talk!*
And he, who's the true *shadow from the heat*,
And shelter from the storm, shall guide my feet,
Not only here where first I drew my breath,
But "wheresoe'er I go, through life or death."

INSCRIPTION ON THE ABBEY WALL, FRONTING THE WEST.

Sacred to Zimmerman and Solitude,
Nor worldly cares, nor eastern winds, so rude,
Should hither, could weak man command, intrude.

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*To Livingus, Abbot of Tavistock**.

Thou taught'st thy king to chide his flatt'ring slaves,
By bidding cease to flow the heedless waves.

To the Same †.

When fled thy spirit from this sacred pile,
Presageful thunders shook Britannia's isle.

To Elfrida ‡.

Here to thy heart were peace and virtue known;
Not when thy beauty graced fond Edgar's throne.

To Sir Francis Drake §.

By thee, bold chief! around th' astonish'd world,
Britannia's sovereign flag was first unfurl'd.

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* Livingus lived in the reign of Canute, and was much beloved by that monarch.

† "Just as he was about to expire—Horrisonus crepitus per totam Angliam auditus, ut ruina et finis totius putaretur orbis." See 'Worthies of Devon.'

‡ Elfrida caused her son-in-law, Edward the martyr, to be murdered, that her own son Ethelred might succeed to the crown.

§ Sir Francis Drake was born at Crowndale, about a mile from Tavistock.

To Glanvil.*

Here to thine eye, illustrious sage!
Themis unrolled her ample page.

To the Family of Fitz of Fitz-ford †.

Ye patriot race! Fond favourites of renown!
Yours was the warlike sword, the peaceful gown.

To Browne ‡.

Your pastoral lyre the hand of fancy strung,
In Ina's combe when Walla's love you sung.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE ABBEY WALL, NEAR THE TAVY.

This wall, the abbey's sacred bound, between,
Tavy, though not unheard, yet, ah! unseen,
Flows on, regardless of my votive lays,
Or thine, O Browne! the boast of happier days.
Yet still I'll string the lyre, still preach the word,
Or all unheeded, or but idly heard;
Content my labours but to *one* be known;
He, who's *Himself* the *great reward* alone.

Having before described Betsey Grimbal's tower, I have here only to mention that it is situated near the entrance to our house, in the quarter towards the town; but we must still continue our walk to the still-house of the monks. In doing so we must pass the winding path which threads the lawn, at the extremity of which, and forming a very picturesque and elegant object, stands what I call *Cleopatra's Needle.* This is nothing more than a

* Glanvil was one of the Justices of the Common Pleas. His house, Kilworthy, is situated near Tavistock.

† As there is no inscription on the monument in the church, it is uncertain to which of this remarkable family it was erected.

‡ In his 'Britannia's Pastorals,' he has introduced the love of Tavy for Walla; a poetical name for Wallabrook, which runs into it.

stone about ten feet high, somewhat of the obelisk form, with an inscription which shows it to be a Romanized British memorial of the dead.* *This* stone was lately presented to my husband in the most handsome manner by Sir Ralph Lopez, the present proprietor of the beautiful domain of Maristowe, in our neighbourhood. Thus you find we have *two* of these rare monuments of antiquity stationed in our garden. Not far from the obelisk there is an arbour, which was speedily constructed. Mr. Bray removed to that spot, from the front of the Abbey-house, which it nearly covered, a very fine *tea-tree,* as it is called, by planting it, and bringing forward the branches with the support of a light frame work; so that one and the same day saw the rise and completion of his arbour. The branches thus bent forward afterwards struck root, the same at their tops as at the bottom. The birds are very fond of this bower, and build their nests in and near it. In the arbour there is placed, by way of seat, the capital of a column that in all probability belonged to the Abbey-church. The ornaments which decorated the front are obliterated; but on one of the sides may still be seen a trefoil emblem of the Trinity, and on the other a cross. By the form of the latter, and the style of the whole, I should think this capital is as old as the time of Livingus, when the Abbey was rebuilt, after being destroyed by the Danes. I ought not to omit stat-

* Such memorials are of the highest antiquity. Josephus (Book the 7th) describes one, as a marble Stélé, near the holy city of Jerusalem, that was erected as a memorial of himself by Absalom. In scripture it is called 'Absalom's place.' The custom of erecting monuments for eminent persons during their lifetime prevailed also at one period in the middle ages, as we read in Froissart.

ing that so highly did the late Mr. Repton, the celebrated landscape gardener, estimate Mr. Bray's taste in the art, that he more than once consulted him; and used good-humouredly to say, that if all trades failed Mr. Bray might succeed him in his profession.

Beyond the obelisk is a little bridge, built of stone, that crosses the Tavistock canal, on the opposite bank of which arises my favourite tree, so often named, the noble cedar. The bridge leads to the *second* division of the garden, bounded on the left by a lateral wall that belonged to the Abbey, and joining the still-house, which also unites with the massive and lengthened boundary walls of the Abbot's grounds towards the river. *This* is a very interesting spot. A walk, shaded with trees, (so that it literally forms an avenue of a sombre character, quite in harmony with monastic buildings,) runs about three hundred yards, close under this portion of the Abbey walls, in a direct line from the still-house. A door in the first-mentioned *lateral* wall opens into what is now our kitchen-garden, and there we can walk under the lofty and battlemented portion of the ancient walls next the river. The ramparts, from which you look through the battlements upon the Tavy beneath, is still entire. From this spot you also command a good view of some of the remains of the monastic edifices that exist in the town.

Returning to the second garden, we come out close to the still-house. In this tower there is an upper and an under apartment, now in a very ruinous state; but the former, a few years ago, before the decaying roof for want of repair partially fell in, afforded a very snug upper room, that would

have made a good study for Friar Bacon; and which likewise reminds me of Buffon's study in the tower of his garden at Montbard, in Burgundy, where that great naturalist and most eloquent writer patiently toiled at those works which are now held in honour by all the nations of Europe. In the little room above noticed there are three windows, one trefoiled, the others round headed, that look out on the Tavy, which runs at the base of the public walk, foaming over rocks below. The still-house is overgrown with ivy, and so much does it hide the architecture of the buildings and the windows, that Mr. Bray is about to have it partially cleared away; and this he has hitherto done once every two or three years. Some time ago a wood-dove took up her abode in the ivy that grows thus luxuriantly about the old tower. I was fond of seeing the bird fly to and from her nest; and I believe I may say that I saved its life, by requesting our neighbour and cousin, Mr. John Bray, to forbear firing at it. But the bird did not know her true friend, for it fled from me as I approached the spot that gave her shelter,—a circumstance which suggested to me, though a very humble votary of the muses, a few lines which Mr. Bray wishes me to send you in this letter, as he is pleased to say they belong to the history of our garden; and as I know you to be one of those indulgent poets who look with a kindly feeling on the little productions of others, I will, without further apology, here venture to give you my lines:—

TO THE WOOD-DOVE.

Oh! fly not away, silly dove, from thy nest;
No footstep is mine to intrude:
Return to thine ivy-built covert of rest,
And cherish thy soft-feather'd brood.

But here, pretty bird, prithee make thee thy bower,
Thou shalt find it a shelter of love;
In this old abbey wall, near yon gray-mantled tower,
Where the ivy is nodding above.

Yes—there, when the wind sighs in sad fitful moans,
While Tavy rolls dark through the dell,
Fast foaming along o'er the flood-beaten stones,
Thou shalt nestle secure in thy cell.

Or when at grey eve, or the still summer night,
Whilst the clouds in soft livery shine,
Oh, then, pretty wood-dove, bend hither thy flight,
And the care to protect thee be mine.

Here no fowler shall harm thee, no harsh sounds intrude,
Thou shall list to the notes of thy mate;
Thou shalt hear but the chirps of thy young, tender brood,
So blest in their innocent state.

Still thou wander'st abroad on thy light, silver'd wings
From her who would shelter thy nest;
Oh! turn thee again, ere thine own folly brings
A wound to that beautiful breast.

Ah! how oft shun we those, foolish dove, like thy flight,
To whose precepts we soonest should bend:
For the smiles of the world, for its follies so light,
We leave the warm heart of a friend.

I have but one spot more to notice in our garden; and that is one I never can approach without feelings of the tenderest regret. It is the spot where my beloved mother planted a laurestine, as a memorial, before she quitted the vicarage to return to her own home; a journey which, from her great age, I must not hope she can ever undertake again. I often look on that tree, and remember that the hand which planted it had sustained me in infancy, guided my youth, nursed me in sickness and in sorrow, and never, throughout life, met mine but with the most devoted kindness and affection*.

* The beloved mother, here mentioned, Mrs. Anne Kempe, died in March, 1835.

Well may the love of a child to a parent be called filial *piety*, as distinguishing, as raising it above all other earthly duties or affections; for surely if there is to be seen in this world an image of God's watchfulness over the creatures he has formed, it is to be found in the tenderness of a dear mother. Her care has something in it that is holy; her heart and eye are ever with her child; her solicitude is incessant, absence cannot shake it, for she watches, even at a distance, for the happiness and safety of her offspring. Misfortune or distress, that loosen the bonds of worldly regard, draw but the closer those of parental affection; and the afflicted child is often the dearest because it is the sufferer. In its prosperity, a mother forgets her own cares, and if it wins honour she enjoys that most rare of all noble feelings, to rejoice in another's praise more than in her own. Death cannot conquer her affection; it but sanctifies it; and she has a cherished hope that will blunt his most bitter pang,—to meet her child beyond the grave. A parent's love, too, does not desert even the guilty; it outlives shame, for it will wait, like God himself, and hope for penitence, and run to meet it, and rejoice over the lost that is found, more than over the just who need no forgiveness.

The postern in our Abbey walls that opens on the walk, is the nearest way from our house to that quiet and beautiful valley Crowndale; and as I intend to conclude my letter with some account of it, I take the present opportunity of mentioning that, in my solitary rambles to this favourite spot, I have not unfrequently met a remarkable character of this place, who seems as fond of the banks of the Tavy, in the direction towards Crowndale, as I am myself.

And if you will but let me so far indulge my fancy as to say I will now take you thither, whilst we pass on I will endeavour to make you, in some measure, acquainted with this good old man, who, with his fishing rod in hand, may be often found throwing a line into the river, the favourite amusement of his walks.

This worthy person, though born in humble life, and possessing no advantages of education beyond those of reading and writing, may truly be called a Christian philosopher; for if to possess the soul in content and peace, to walk honestly before God, and to receive His word with the simplicity and docility of a little child, constitute the essentials of true wisdom, he of whom I speak deserves the title as much as if he had studied in the schools. I know you delight in the 'short and simple annals of the poor;' such you wished me to collect,—and wherever I can find any that have the interest which religion and morality never fail to give them, they shall not want a record, as far as I have the power to bestow it; for no more in writing than in society would I wish to see that "Dives and Lazarus gulph," between the poor and the better classes, which shows nothing so much, in those who form it, as a hard heart and an arrogant mind. I have often thought that though in the biography of the rich we may learn the lessons of this world, we, generally speaking, should be more likely to mark the way to a better in the annals of those amongst the poor, who are, as Bossuet says, "Souls hidden to the eyes of men, and chiefly hidden to their own eyes, but who know God, and who are known of him."

The good man of whom I speak bears no higher

station than that of clerk in our parish church. He is more than seventy years old, and still performs the duties of his office with cheerfulness and regularity. He is a most single-hearted being kind, to every one; and with a privilege, to which his years and his worth fully entitle him, he will give his word of advice, and even of admonition, to all, with the same good will and sincerity; nor is he other than charitable in allowing for the infirmities of his neighbours. Mr. Doney, for such is his name, though he has lived here above fifty years, was born at Bovey Tracy in this county. He considers all the good that has befallen him in this life, and the happy course he has hitherto held through it, under Divine Providence, to be owing to the care and example of his mother: who, though obliged to toil for her daily bread, to bring up her fatherless children in the humblest walks of society, appears, by all I can learn, to have been a most excellent woman. From the earliest age, she taught her little ones the knowledge and fear of God; to be kind and affectionate to each other, truly "forbearing one another in love:" and so much did our worthy clerk feel his obligations to her, for thus "training him up in the way he should go," that when she was on her death-bed, he knelt down by her, thanked her for it, and prayed God to give her the reward.

At eleven years old he was put to the now forgotten trade of a stay-maker; but his master dying when he was about eighteen, he went to sea, in the whale fishery to the coast of Newfoundland. On his return to Tavistock he married; and for many years lived happily with his wife, till she was removed from him by death. He has since

taken another, who is still alive. After his first marriage, he returned to business and settled in this town; but he soon found that stay-making was fast failing as a trade; and though he had no prospect of any other to which he could turn his hand, yet, to use his own words, he put his trust in God, and waited His time as patiently as he could. The parish clerk died just at this juncture; and the late vicar having observed how constant Mr. Doney had been in his attendance at church for ten years, and hearing that he bore a good character, gave him the appointment so recently become vacant. This happened at the very moment the good man's business was become so dead that he must have been reduced to extreme necessity but for the relief thus afforded to him. Mr. Doney, who in all the events of his life never forgets the 'Great First Cause,' gave the praise for this blessing where it was due; and a joyful day was it for him when he became, though the humblest, a servant in the house of the Lord. Two years after, in 1811, Mr. Bray became the Vicar of Tavistock; and from that hour to the present he has had the fullest experience of the integrity and the true christian piety of his worthy clerk, for whom he entertains the highest respect and regard. It is not a little remarkable that he has never been prevented by illness, or any other cause, a single day, discharging his duties in the church during all these years. Our friend, Mr. Doney, is *now* of a spare person, and begins to feel the infirmities of time, and to show them in his countenance; yet the expression of cheerfulness and benevolence by which that countenance has always been distinguished, is unchanged, and I doubt not will remain the same to the last,

since it is but a reflection of the good man's mind. He has a weak thin voice, though he is quick and ready in all matters of business. In his dress he observes the old fashion of wearing buckles in his shoes; and has two wigs, one light coloured for week days, the other, somewhat darker, for Sundays. Indeed the wigs of the Tavistock parish clerks have, I understand, always been famous. Mr. Doney's predecessor, in the time of a former vicar, used to inherit the cast-off wigs of his master, from whose new frizzled headpiece they were alone distinguished by being less powdered and pomatumed.

It is a great pleasure to us to hear Mr. Doney talk: in doing so he has a habit of standing with his hands crossed upon his arms; and his remarks on the circumstances of the times, or such as may occur in the parish, or on the sermon of a Sunday, though full of simplicity, are well worth the hearing and remembering, for they are always founded on truth and good sense; since Mr. Doney is one of those who study the Bible as a practical and daily guide, not merely as a book only to be reverenced and thought of on a Sunday. Indeed, such is his love of truth in its most literal sense, that he always speaks it to the letter; and whatever he tells you, if about himself, or anything else, you may know it is the relation of a simple fact, neither palliated nor coloured by prejudice, nor having one word more or less than is necessary. His ideas on most subjects are truly primitive, and of that old school which is now almost forgotten by the rising generation. He considers loyalty to the king, and submission to the laws of the land, and to the rulers of the same, as much a part of scripture commandment as any

other written precept to regulate our duties, and he likes not to hear those placed by Providence in such high stations too familiarly spoken of, or their conduct too curiously questioned by their inferiors; as he thinks it tends to shake that reverence and old respect which their office ought to secure for them, for their own benefit, as well as for the good of those who are placed under them in the state.

For the Church, as being founded on the very spirit of scripture, its liturgy, its ceremonies, and its ministers, he entertains the greatest love and veneration; and he thinks that all dissent from such an admirable establishment is the most bitter and deadly work of that spirit of evil, who goes about to produce this dissent by taking advantage of the pride of some, the doubts of others, and the ignorance of all. The devil he justly holds to be an agent as active in these days as in any of old; and that it is now one of his wiles to hide himself, and to make men think little of him, so that he may the more covertly watch to catch souls, as the wolf does the stray sheep from the flock.

In temporal matters our honest friend is somewhat of a theorist. Snuff he considers as a sort of panacea; and that it is particularly advantageous in keeping the head in a comfortable and quiet state; and he strongly recommends the use of it to those who read or write much. His favourite theory respecting all diseases that afflict the human frame is, that they arise from nothing but the wind; and he thinks that the doctors should go to work to cure the primary cause rather than secondary effects. This theory he illustrates by arguments drawn from nature; the constant and obvious action which the

wind has upon the seas, rivers and clouds; its power to convey pestilence, or to dispel noxious vapours, &c. And he justly thinks that the severity of most disorders is much increased by man not living so simply or so laboriously as he was designed to do by his Creator; and, above all, by a want of Christian patience and humility—patience to keep his mind easy, and humility to keep down his expectations, so that he may not trouble himself by the crosses and disappointments of the world; to which he considers the favourites of Heaven are more peculiarly liable; Christ having promised to all such *persecutions* as amongst the blessings they are to receive in their pilgrimage here on earth; and all trouble either of mind or body may come under that head. Many books Mr. Doney does not think good; because, he says, they take off our time from the study of the Bible, which, if a man reads all his life long, will be always found new, and he will become the wiser for it. Jeremy Taylor (or "worthy Mr. Taylor," as he calls that good and learned Bishop) is his most favourite author; and so well is he acquainted with the few works he has of that divine, that I verily believe he knows the greater part of them by heart; and he is very fond of referring to them and to scripture, in conversation, always with cheerfulness, and without the least shade of what is termed cant. The truth is, his mind is constantly bent on the word of God; his conversation, therefore, naturally takes its colouring from his thoughts. One of his opinions is, that every heart may be known by the pen; for let a person be never so deceitful, he cannot mask himself, for God will not let him, in his writings; and

that if you often write to any one, you may know the heart of that person as well as if you could turn it inside out: for little words, he says, like little things, show man or woman as much as great ones; and little things are not taken so much "*count*" of; and there is seen the *spirit*, as in the circumstance of the widow's mite.

Indeed, whenever you enter into conversation with good Mr. Doney, it is sure to lead to some moral, or some religious observation; for he never can think that the wisdom, the fear, or the love of God should be separated from anything. The last time I met him in one of my walks to Crowndale, he had his fishing rod in his hand; and as I learnt we were partly going the same way, we joined company; and on that day, like the melancholy Jaques (though the word *melancholy* does not very well apply to my friend), I found him "full of matter." The morning, he told me, was not favourable for fishing; which I should not myself have guessed, as the day was sunny and delightful; but he felt as much amusement, I believe, in throwing his line and in catching nothing, as if he had been ever so successful in his sport. As we passed along, the beauty of the river, as its limpid waters, that seemed to talk to us, ran gurgling over the rocks and stones, drew our attention; and the wooded hills and opening valley of Crowndale shone with all the freshness and vivacity of a morning in the spring: I made some slight remark on the country; and he followed it up by an observation that forcibly struck me for its singular coincidence, *even in expression*, with a line in Shakspeare; a poet whose works, I am certain, he had never seen: for, whilst speaking of the

wisdom of God displayed in his creation, Mr. Doney said, "that, for his part, he *could find sermons in the very stones, and Providence in every thing about him!*"

Another thing he said that was as striking as it was just—"That anger was a storm, in which reason could not be heard; and we must take Christ's word, like Peter, to lay the tempest, or we should sink in it." Mary Colling, is a great favourite with Mr. Doney; and no wonder: where there is so much congeniality in true wisdom, (that which rules in the heart) there will be a fellowship of kindness and of feeling. If I were to write down half the wise and good remarks I have heard from our worthy parish clerk, this letter would not soon find an end. Another anecdote, however, I must mention, ere I bid adieu to him. He was here the other day, and assisted me in looking over the oldest register we have (beginning in 1614), as I wished to ascertain the time of the birth of one of the famous family of Glanville. We chanced to turn over the pages to the entry of the *deaths* in the great plague-year in Tavistock, 1626. The list was a formidable one; so formidable, that Mr. Doney's spirit of religious reflection could not pass it without a comment.

He said, and most justly, how thankful we ought to be that our present register did not show the same melancholy numbers, considering how the cholera had lately raged at Plymouth, and how constant our communication had been with that town. There was but one year that he remembered, since he had been clerk, when the deaths in this parish (which are about one hundred yearly) had extended to any extraordinary amount; that was when the

small-pox raged so terribly amongst the children. He told me the poor mothers were then, like Rachel, weeping for their children, and would not be comforted because they were not; but he did all he could, in his way, to console them. "For I told them," said Mr. Doney, "that it was Christ's word to suffer little children to come to him, for of such was the kingdom of heaven; and that was the best thing I could think of to say to them."—"A bishop could not have spoken better, Mr. Doney," I replied, "than you did to these poor mothers; and I dare say you did comfort them."—"I did my best," he rejoined, "but all comfort comes from above."

I must not forget, too, an instance of Mr. Doney's good will in speaking in defence of a young clergyman in this neighbourhood whom some one censured, in his presence, for going out hunting. He told the censurer "not to judge rash judgment; for Isaac, as good a soul as ever breathed, sent out his son Esau to kill venison for him that he might make a savoury dish, and that in our time there was no harm in it; and allowance must be made for young men, though they were ministers." Our good clerk, in the single-heartedness of his character, his affectionate respect for his "master," as he calls Mr. Bray, and his love of the church, reminds me much of the worthy parish clerk so feelingly described by Izaak Walton in his Life of Hooker.

In the quiet valley of Crowndale, situated about a mile distant to the south-west of Tavistock, and towards which we have been thus slowly advancing, there are none of those bold and striking features which afford a grand subject for a painter, and a good one for an author. Yet the artist may find in

it many a picturesque study, and the fertile fancy may there indulge its reverie of past times with advantage, surrounded, as the valley is, by objects of a pleasing and pastoral character. Viewed with feelings of this description (and surely few can see the birth-place of Drake without them), the imagination, which has a charm to make even nature herself obedient to her behests, may here exert its power in a thousand agreeable visions, till, like the azure fields of air, when the rainbow spreads its glorious arch amid them, the reposing landscape is seen more beautiful from the varied colouring of a poetic mind.

The river flows past the picturesque arches of West Bridge in a rippling course over its bed of pebbles and stones in many a wind and bend towards Crowndale, till suddenly taking a bolder sweep near a place called Brook, it encounters and rushes over several scattered masses of rock, foaming with that impetuosity after rain which gives so animated a character to most streams that, like the Tavy, have their source in mountainous or elevated lands. A pretty cottage at Brook stands close to the water's side, with steps cut in the shelving rock that descend to it from the little garden. Fields and meadows are opposite; and many an old tree, whose roots start from the banks of the river, throws its branches across it where shade and sunshine may alternately be found to relieve each other with the most beautiful effects, whilst the tremulous boughs make those dancing shadows that chequer the ground beneath. In the summer months the fox-glove, here so tall and luxuriant, and a vast variety of wild plants, give a rich and gay appearance

to the banks of the hedge-rows and the fields; and the cattle, in many of them, stray to the river's side, and are often seen standing as motionless as statues cooling themselves in the water.

Farther down, the valley is terminated by lofty and steep hills (and *there* the scene becomes more wild, rocky, and broken) that are clothed to their summits with wood, and form part of the ancient domain of Walreddon. At no great distance from Brook, and opposite to the spot where Drake was born, the Tavy is seen as clear as crystal. When I was last there, several sheep were grazing on a plot of grass that runs down to the water's brink where some of them were drinking; and a whole flock of geese, that appeared quite familiar with their four-footed companions, flapped their wings and sailed upon the river as stately as swans, with the highest degree of enjoyment, and reminded me of your geese at the rocky basin in the mountain stream near Castlerigg; for, like your flock, they would sometimes "thrust their long necks under the water straight down, and turned up their broad yellow feet; sometimes rose half way up, shaking and clapping their wings; sometimes with retorted head pruned themselves as they floated. Their motion did not in the slightest degree defile the water, for there was no soil to disturb: the stream, flowing from its mountain springs over a bed of rock, had contracted no impurity in its course, and these birds were so delicately clean that they could not sully it: the few feathers which they plucked or shook off were presently carried away by the current."*

* See Colloquies, vol. i. page 146.

There is something peculiarly beautiful in this spot. It is so sequestered, that it seems shut out from all the world. The surrounding objects are simple; there is nothing to produce surprise, or any other strong emotion, but all is tranquil and in harmony. There is cheerfulness in the verdure of the meadows; the little plot of grass is thickly set with tufts of daisies, and with the white clover, that banquet for the sheep. It is so sheltered, that the rudest winds seldom disturb its repose; and here the Tavy does not foam or rush along impetuously, but passes onward in gentle ripples,

"That sing the song which contemplation loves."

And HERE DRAKE WAS BORN; and here stood the old barn-looking cottage (for it was no better) in which he first drew breath, with its antique windows, and all its character of past times about it, till, alas, for modern innovation! this poor building, which should have been held sacred as long as one stone would rest upon another, was pulled down to give place to an ox-stall, or some such common appendage to the farm-house hard by*. This happened while Mr. Bray was in London, many years back; for had he known it in time he would have written to the proprietor, the Duke of Bedford, to warn his Grace of the destruction that was meditated against a vestige so replete with interest to all who are not insensible to the power of local and historical associations; to all who delight to trace whatever may be connected with men, the greatness

* Mr. Bray fortunately made a slight sketch of the house in which Drake was born, not long before it was pulled down. This was very incorrectly copied in the etching which appeared in Lewis's Views of the Tavy.

of whose designs is derived from that of their genius; and, God prospering them, who become an honour to their age and to their country. Mr. Bray once suggested to the Duke of Bedford that, as the house no longer stood, it would be well to erect, as a memorial, a common block of granite near the spot, in the form of an obelisk, like the Romanized-British stones. He wrote, also, the following distich, by way of inscription, should the Duke think it worth while to have it cut in the block:—

"Who the New World bade British thunders shake?
Who mark'd out bounds to both?—Our native Drake."

I do not know whence Crowndale derived its name. Mr. Bray, in one of his inscriptions*, has been pleased to consider it was so called from Edgar's having there offered the crown to Elfrida. An antiquary would ask his authority for such a supposition; but a poet will not be unwilling to admit it, though it have no surer basis than that of imagination.

Tradition, in this part of the west, is still busied with the fame of Drake; and all the stories told of him are of a wild and extravagant nature. No doubt this originated from the terror of his name, and the wonder of his exploits—exploits so extraordinary, that they were here considered to owe their success to something supernatural in himself, and that he often performed them by the power of enchantment. Nor can we feel surprised at this

* "Fired by her charms, that far outshone renown,
Edgar, on Tavy's banks, his kingly crown
Laid at Elfrida's feet, as Beauty's meed;
And does not Crowndale still attest the deed?"

credulity when we recollect that, even in these days with the peasantry of Devon, witchcraft is still believed to be practised in the county, and that extraordinary circumstances or sufferings are brought about by the active agency and co-operation of the devil *.

Thus was our hero converted, by popular opinion, into a wizard; and as such the "old warrior" (for so the lower classes here call Drake) is to the present time considered amongst them. The following traditionary tales will serve to show the sort of necromantic adventures which credulity has fastened on the memory of the great naval admiral of the reign of good Queen Bess.

One day whilst Sir Francis Drake was playing at the game of Kales † on the Hoe at Plymouth, it was announced to him that a foreign fleet (the Armada, I suppose) was sailing into the harbour close by. He showed no alarm at the intelligence, but persisted in playing out his game. When this was concluded, he ordered a large block of timber and a hatchet to be brought to him. He bared his arms, took the axe in hand and manfully chopped up the wood into sundry smaller blocks. These he hurled into the sea, while, at his command, every block arose a fire-ship; and, within a short space of time, a general destruction of the enemy's fleet took

* Our much esteemed friend, Arthur Chichester, Esq., late of Grenofen, and now of Stokelake, told me a story of a farmer coming to him as a magistrate to consult how he had best proceed against an old woman who had bewitched him in his arm, and his cattle also. I have known many other similar instances.

† This is our provincial name, for what, I believe, is nothing more than the common game of nine-pins, or skittles, now played by the vulgar in public-house yards.

place in consequence of the irresistible strength of those vessels he had called up to "flame amazement" on the foes of Elizabeth and of England. Wild as this story is, there is something of grandeur in the idea of Drake standing on such a commanding elevation as the Hoe, with the sea (which spreads itself at its foot) before him, and that element, together with the fire-ships, obedient to the power of his genius, whose energies were thus marvellously exerted for the safety of his country.

The next tradition respecting Sir Francis was communicated to me by our worthy and esteemed friend, Mr. Davies Gilbert, who has shown the interest he takes in such fragments of the "olden time" by the very curious collection he some years ago published of the Cornish Ballads.

In the days of Drake the vulgar considered the world to be composed of two parallel planes, the one at a certain distance from the other. In reference to this space it was commonly said that Sir Francis had "*shot the gulf*," meaning that his ship had turned over the edge of the upper plane so as to pass on to the waters of the under. "There is," said Mr. Davies Gilbert, "an old picture of Drake at Oxford, representing him holding a pistol in one hand, which, in former years, the man who acted as showman to strangers was wont to say (still further improving upon the story) was the very pistol itself with which Sir Francis shot the gulf!"

Another story told of this hero is, that the people of Plymouth were so destitute of water in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, that they were obliged to send their clothes to Plympton to be washed in fresh

water. Sir Francis Drake resolved to rid them of this inconvenience. So he called for his horse, mounted, rode to Dartmoor, and hunted about till he found a very fine spring. Having fixed on one that would suit his purpose, he gave a smart lash to his horse's side, pronouncing as he did so some magical words, when off went the animal as fast as he could gallop, and the stream followed his heels all the way into the town. This assuredly was not only the most wonderful, but the most cheap and expeditious mode of forming a canal ever known or recorded by tradition.

The next story of Sir Francis is a very singular one, nor can I in the least trace its origin to any real circumstance which might have been exaggerated in the relation, till it became, like the other tales about our hero, necromantic. It seems, in every way, a fiction. The good people here say that whilst the "old warrior" was abroad, his lady, not hearing from him for seven years, considered he must be dead, and that she was free to marry again. Her choice was made—the nuptial day fixed, and the parties had assembled in the church. Now it so happened that at this very hour Sir Francis Drake was at the antipodes of Devonshire, and one of his spirits, who let him know from time to time how things went on in England, whispered in his ear in what manner he was about to lose his wife. Sir Francis rose up in haste, charged one of his great guns, and sent off a cannon ball so truly aimed that it shot up right through the globe, forced its way into the church, and fell with a loud explosion between the lady and her intended bride-

groom. "It is the signal of Drake," she exclaimed, "he is alive, and I am still a wife. There must be neither troth nor ring between thee and me."

Another legend of Sir Francis represents him as acting from motives of jealousy and cruelty in a way he was very little likely to do. The story says that whilst he was once sailing in foreign seas he had on board the vessel a boy of uncommonly quick parts. In order to put them to the proof, Sir Francis questioned the youth and bade him tell what might be their antipodes at that moment. The boy without hesitation told him Barton Place (for so Buckland Abbey was then called), the Admiral's own mansion in his native county. After the ship had made some further progress Sir Francis repeated his question, and the answer he received was, that they were then at the antipodes of London Bridge. Drake, surprised at the accuracy of the boy's knowledge, exclaimed "Hast thou, too, a devil? If I let thee live, there will be one a greater man than I am in the world;" and, so saying, he threw the lad overboard into the sea, where he perished.

There is likewise another legend concerning Drake, of which I have heard a confused account: it is something about the devil helping him to move a great stone, whilst he was repairing certain parts of Buckland Abbey; but I have so vague a recollection of this story, that I must not venture to repeat it in detail. You once mentioned having yourself heard this tradition when you were in Devon; and very possibly you may remember these particulars which I have forgotten.

The people of Tavistock say, that notwithstanding this place is fourteen miles from the sea (at Ply-

mouth), Sir Francis Drake offered to make his native town a sea-port, if the inhabitants would but have granted to him the estate of Mile-mead.

I have something more to say of Drake ere I quit the subject of local anecdotes about him; but this letter having run on to an unconscionable length, I must here conclude with assuring you, my dear Sir, how much I am,

With every feeling of respect,
Very sincerely yours,
ANNA ELIZA BRAY*.

* I cannot here resist extracting from a letter which I had the honour to receive from Mr. Southey, in reply to the above, a passage or two respecting Drake.

"You have indeed collected a rich harvest of traditions concerning Sir Francis Drake. I had heard of his shooting the gulf; and of his pushing the boy overboard who knew that they were under London bridge. My story of the stone is yours of the marriage: with this variation, that instead of a ball coming up through the earth, a huge round stone fell through the air upon the train of the intended bride's gown, as she was on the way to church; upon which she turned back, saying, she knew it came from her husband. My story adds that the stone is still used as a weight upon the harrow of the farm; and if it be removed from the estate in which it fell, always returns thither. Yours is much the grander fiction. My story says, moreover, that it was not long before Sir Francis returned, and in the dress of a beggar asked alms of his wife at her own door; but in the midst of his feigned tale, a smile escaped him, and he was recognized, and of course joyfully embraced. This is borrowed from Guy, Earl of Warwick, and is found also in other romances. The miracle of leading the water is common in the lives of the saints, and especially of the Irish saints, who generally led it up hill to make the miracle the greater.

"These stories probably originated in the notion which was very piously entertained by the Spaniards that Drake dealt with the devil, and owed his success to the assistance which the devil gave him. The English catholics were likely enough to have received this notion from their Spanish friends; and it made its way among the people because of its romantic character. The black art in popular tradition

is no very black business when it is not employed for black purposes; and there is generally some contrivance for whitewashing such proficients as Drake, Friar Bungay, and Friar Bacon just in time;—Lope de Vega, to whose Dragontia I have this moment referred to refresh my memory, says of Drake, that our countrymen admitted he had dealings with the devil, and praised him for it, so that it was no calumny of Spain's,

Que no es en erto España mentirosa:

and that he (Lope), when he was in the Armada, had heard all this from some soldiers in the same ship, who had been eight years prisoners in England. The most curious piece of slanderous fiction concerning him which I have seen is in the Latin poem of a Jesuit. I shall extract it for a note in my Naval History; in which, indeed, if your letters had been published, I should have been very much tempted to have incorporated all your stories."

LETTER XXVIII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS:—Drake, his residence at Buckland Abbey—Benefits conferred by him on the town of Plymouth—The Leet—Drake; the more interesting parts of his life not generally known—His family—His father; probably Vicar of Tavistock—His exile into Kent—Date of Francis Drake's birth not known with any certainty—Six Articles—Sir Francis Russel, his godfather—Drake's father concealed in a ship—On the death of Henry, becomes a chaplain—Francis Drake goes to sea—Death of his master, who leaves him his ship—Drake related to Hawkins—Joins him in an enterprize to the West Indies—Spanish treachery—Drake loses all his property—Vows vengeance against Spain—Fuller's apology for his piracies—Drake sails in the Dragon and the Swan—His fortunes improve—Is raised to the rank of captain—Sails in the Pascha—Arrives off America—Steers for Port Pheasant—Observes Captain Garret's warning—Fortifies himself on the coast, and builds up the pinnaces—Joined by Rawse—Drake receives information of the state of Nombre de Dios—Prepares to set forward on an expedition to attack the town—His great hazard—The town assaulted—His men eager for the spoil—He leads on to the king's treasure—His weapons injured by rain—Panic—His bravery—Danger of his men—Harangues them—Leads on again; is dangerously wounded—Carried to the ships—Spanish Envoy, or spy—His interview with the Captain—Parts company with Rawse—Feels success in this expedition to be necessary to his reputation—Learns that the richest Spanish settlements are at Carthagena—Anchors near St. Bernard—Prevails with the ship carpenter to destroy the Swan—Drake departs for Rio Grande—Surprised by a hurricane during the night—A dead calm succeeds—Swarm of mosquitoes—Descry a Spaniard on the opposite shore—Pillage—Erect four magazines for their spoils—His brother John goes in search of the Scymerons—Holds friendly communication with them—Waits to take from the rivers the gold cast into them—Drake's motive for desiring to possess wealth—Builds a fortress of timber—His successes—His daring and romantic courage—Leaves the coast of Carthagena for Rio de Heba—Drake's Crew; their distress from want of food—Sickness—Very fatal—Arrives at Port Diego—His brother Joseph

dies in his arms—Receives news that the Spanish fleet is arrived at Nombre de Dios to bear off the treasures of Panama—Determines to possess himself of them—A Spanish ship captured—The negroes wish to murder the men—Drake protects them—Drake sets off on his overland expedition in pursuit of the treasures—His journey and adventures noticed—Ascends the great tree—Sees the north and south Atlantic oceans—Forms his resolution to be the first to sail an English ship in those unknown seas—His prayer for success—Arrives near Panama—Marches towards Venta Cruz—Surprises a Spanish soldier sleeping—Commands a strict silence—The mules laden with treasure appear in sight—Drake's plan rendered abortive by the drunkenness of one of his followers—Robert Pike—A body of Spaniards stationed to receive them—Assault and defence—Drake's victory—His humanity to the conquered—His march overland—Arrives on the banks of the Tortugas—Town of huts built with the branches of the Palmetto—Drake sends his token to the captain to sail up the river—Drake on board the Minion—Sails to the Cabezas to seize the treasure—Joined by a Frenchman—He leaves the large vessel—Proceeds for Rio Francisco—Lands—Mules and their drivers advance from Panama—Spanish soldiers who guard the treasure overcome—The treasure too weighty to be removed by the crew—Their perilous situation—Drake's gallantry and spirit—The genius of Drake suggests an expedient to save them—Constructs a raft—For six hours in danger of instant death—Descries the pinnaces—Joy at their deliverance—Rewards the faithful negro, Pedro, with his sword set with diamonds—Returns to England—Drake lands at Plymouth, 1573—The people run out of church to see him—Drake's great plan to sail his ship in the unknown seas—Obstacles—He overcomes them—1577, once more quits the shores of England—Driven back by a storm—Sails again—comes in sight of the isle of Magadon—Lands—The savages seize one of his crew—Touches at Cape Blanc—The inhabitants beg water—Drake gives it to them—They assist him with provisions—His fleet draws near the Line—They approach the coast of Brazil—Inhabitants—Incantations to raise a storm—April 7th, dreadful storm—The Christopher supposed to be lost—Joins the fleet again—Drake enters the river Plate—Violent tempest—Loss of the fleet apprehended—He enters the Elizabeth—Sends Captain Winter to look after the ships missing.

Vicarage, Tavistock, Oct. 8, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN returning to the subject of Drake, I ca
not forbear observing that there is some r

suppose our great naval hero retained throughout life an affection for the neighbourhood in which he was born; a feeling that we often see strongly marked in men of genius. It is not unlikely Drake (who, by his own merit and God's favour, rose from a poor lad to become the terror of Spain, and the wonder of England) might have a secret pleasure in visiting the scenes of his boyhood, where his ardent mind had employed itself in those visions of enterprize and forebodings of success which persons of great understanding at a very early period are apt to indulge, till they sometimes become prophets to themselves, as they feel within them a strong assurance, like the whisper of their better angel, that the course they have to run will be marked by more than ordinary things. Drake's fondness for Buckland Abbey, where during his latter years he frequently resided whilst in England, is well known. There one of the finest portraits of him is still preserved, together with his bible, his sword, and his ship-drum, that went with him round the world. He was also a munificent benefactor to Plymouth, by causing a supply of fresh water to be brought to that town, from a distance of many miles, over the rocky and elevated lands of Dartmoor. On the completion of the *Leet,* for so it is called, the mayor and corporation, dressed in their formalities, accompanied by Sir Francis, came out to meet the water, and followed the stream in procession, as it was for the first time permitted to flow into the town, whilst the ringing of bells and the discharge of cannon welcomed its arrival in full chorus.

On referring to your letter of March, 1831, where you so kindly suggested to me the subjects *you* would wish to see embraced in a local history, so as

to make it of universal interest, you have named "the whole of its History and Biography." Sir Francis Drake, born in our parish, certainly comes under the latter class; and though I shall attempt to give little more than a *sketch* of his life, particularly noticing any events that may be connected with the county of his birth; yet, should these letters ever go beyond your hands, even a *sketch* may not be unacceptable to such of my readers (especially in this part of England) as may never have had the good fortune to meet with Johnson's life of our hero; or Fuller's or Prince's abbreviated notices of him, in the 'Worthies of Devon*.' I have not unfrequently been surprised to find that, even some who are considered reading persons, in this neighbourhood, knew very little more of Drake than that he was born here, sailed round the world, and fought the Armada; whilst of his personal adventures, and the more minute circumstances of his history, replete as they are with wild and romantic interest, they knew nothing whatever, nor seemed to suspect there was anything worth knowing about them.

Francis Drake, the eldest of twelve male children, was the son of a minister of the reformed church. He was born in Crowndale, in the parish of Tavistock, Devon. The time of his birth, as it will appear, I think, on examination, is very doubtful; and as our registers, previous to 1614, were lost or de-

* This letter was written in Oct. 1832. It was not till I had nearly completed the present sketch of Drake's life, that I learnt Mr. Southey was about writing it for his Naval History. Had I known this sooner, I should indeed have touched on the subject with reluctance.

stroyed, probably during the troublesome days of Charles I., there is here no record by which we can now ascertain the date with any certainty. That his father's connexions were very respectable, may be inferred by Sir Francis Russel, afterwards Earl of Bedford, standing sponsor to the child at the font, to whom he gave his own christian name.

If Drake's father might have been the vicar of this place, I have not been able to discover; but as Sir Francis Russel held the abbey lands given by Henry VIII., the patronage of our church came likewise to him, and he might have nominated Drake to the living of Tavistock.

It has been generally asserted by historians that our naval hero was born about the year 1545. This, however, I think I shall prove to be incorrect, since it was *after his* birth that his father fled from Devon to conceal himself in Kent, in consequence of his nonconformity to the fearful Six Articles. Now as these articles became a law in 1539, how could Francis Drake, who, when yet a child, was the companion of his father's flight into Kent, to avoid the danger he incurred by dissent, have been born so long after as 1545?

It may be urged that if Drake held the living of Tavistock (as very likely he did), he might, on the appearance of the Six Articles, throw it up; and retire from the old vicarage in the town, to the poor barn-looking house in Crowndale, in 1539; and might not quit that humble retreat, where he assuredly lived in indigence, till some intimation was conveyed to him that the law would be enforced against him for his disobedience. Admitting this to

be probable, it is not likely he would be suffered to remain unmolested in Crowndale for so long a period as till the year 1545. And another argument may be urged in support of the opinion that his son Francis was born *before* the articles in question were established by law; namely, that it is most improbable Sir Francis Russel—a man so highly favoured and enriched by Henry, and one who so well understood the character of his benefactor—would have exposed himself to the risk of displeasing his royal master by standing sponsor, and giving his own name to the son of a clergyman who refused compliance with the very articles the king had set up; and one of them under a penalty as cruel as that ordained by Nebuchadnezzar himself in support of his idol—the fiery death, on denial of the same*. This circumstance alone, when duly considered, surely will go far to prove that our Drake was born previous to that memorable epocha in the history of the church; and be it also remembered that Sir Francis Russel, to the last, preserved the favour of Henry,—a sure sign he was a cautious man in his conduct towards that tyrant.

I have somewhat dwelt on this point, because in most of the books I have seen about Drake (excepting Johnson's, where no date is given), the authors will have it that he was born in 1545. Where is their authority?

In what manner Drake's father supported himself and his increasing family after his flight into Kent is not known; probably he had friends who assisted

* All persons denying the real presence in the Sacrament were, by the first of Henry's Six Articles, subjected to be burnt alive, and to forfeiture of goods, &c., the same as on a conviction of high treason.

him in his concealment; and as a man who from religious motives placed his very life in peril of an arbitrary law could not be other than conscientious in all points of duty, it will not be conjecturing too much if we consider that the devout feelings that marked the character of our great naval captain throughout life were derived from the early example and instructions of his father. At one period this good man was so much in fear of persecution, that he lay for a considerable time concealed in the hull of a ship, somewhere off the Kentish coast. On the death of Henry, however, he obtained a situation as chaplain in the navy; and it was about this time that he bound Francis apprentice to the master of a small bark that traded to France and Zealand. His service was a hard one on ship-board, but it was not without the reward of its fidelity; for his master dying unmarried, he left Francis Drake his ship as a legacy, with all things belonging to the same. On this event Johnson, with that moralizing spirit which renders all his works so beautiful and so instructive, observes—"That virtue is the surest foundation both of reputation and fortune, and that the first step to greatness is to be honest."

Let us imagine for a moment what must have been the feelings of such a mind as Drake's, on finding himself (hitherto a poor lad, toiling hard and earning but his bare subsistence) at once master of that little world, for such is a ship, which was by degrees to become the means of advancing him in the necessary knowledge of the seas, in the patience of experience, the constancy of courage, and in the advantages of industry, till he should compass the world itself, as the first British navigator who had the

boldness to conceive and to execute such a plan. Hitherto he had been in the best school—that of obedience and faithful service to his master—to learn to govern others; since we generally find in life those persons who have submitted to power in the onset of their career, are the safest with whom it may be trusted in a riper age. For some time Drake followed his old master's trade with diligence and success; but narrow seas and a large mind could ill agree together; for the first were not calculated to admit the exercise of those great enterprizes his genius and his activity prompted him to undertake. He sold, therefore, the bark in which his infant fortunes had been cradled on the seas, and full of those golden dreams with which projects of the new world now filled all heads, the strongest as well as the weakest, he prepared to venture his gains in the trade of the Western Indies. It is not a little amusing to look back, in old writers, for the accounts they brought home of the new world; where gold and jewels were described to be almost as plentiful as in the Arabian tales, and where they seemed to lie as easy of access as if the adventurers carried with them the wonderful lamp of Aladdin, to procure such treasures by a wish, a word, and a turn of the hand.

Drake was related to Hawkins, whose family were of very ancient standing in the county of Devon. Captain John Hawkins had projected an enterprize to the West Indies, and as the reputation of his cousin Francis was now fully established as a good seaman, he was not sorry to be joined by him in the undertaking. It was a luckless one for both; since the gold and silver they had in view were protected

by something that to Drake was more formidable than any danger would have been in an open and obvious form—Spanish treachery; and soon did he and his friend feel its effects. For notwithstanding that England and Spain were then on terms of peace, and that these adventurers had received permission from the viceroy to traffic in the Bay of Mexico, they were so suddenly and treacherously attacked by the Spaniards, that Hawkins lost several ships and men, and Drake the whole of his property which had been embarked in the speculation. In a moment of irritation, when all the fruits of his industry (gathered in the little bark where his humble fortunes had been so much more true to him than his greater expectations) were lost for ever he vowed to wreak his vengeance on the Spaniards. He has been charged by some, more particularly the envious of his own time, with having kept this vow more rigidly than justly; but Fuller seems willing to clear Sir Francis of this charge, and therefore puts the burthen of the blame on another man's shoulders: for he says, "that after Drake's goods were taken by the Spaniards at St. John de Ulva, and he himself scarcely escaped with life, to make him satisfaction, Mr. Drake was persuaded by the minister of the ship, that he might lawfully recover the value of the King of Spain, by reprisal, and repair his losses upon him any where else: the case was clear in sea-divinity; and few are such infidels as not to believe doctrines which make for their own profit: whereupon Drake, though then a poor private man, undertook to revenge himself upon so mighty a monarch."

This early check in the fortunes of our townsman,

that would have broken the spirits and ruined the enterprize of an ordinary man, was with him, perhaps, an advantage: since so strong are the resources of strong minds, that it is not till roused by adversity and the most formidable obstacles, they know their own power, or put forth their utmost energies; and even if such minds bend for awhile, it is but like the bending of the archer's bow, to acquire their necessary impetus. Another cause also might have operated to produce those extraordinary exertions which enabled Drake so soon to rise again after these disasters; his mind was not of that order which can rest in the present: men of his mould call up their recollections of the past to aid their judgment in the future; and the remembrance of misfortune, therefore, is with them less an evil than a monitor, by whose assistance experience becomes wisdom.

Intent on the plan of reprisals recommended to him by "Sea-divinity," and having found how necessary it was to arm himself with caution as the best mode to avoid the snares of treachery, with little means and great patience, Drake made two or three voyages, first in the Dragon, and afterwards in the Swan, to render himself perfectly well acquainted with the coast, and to gain all necessary intelligence respecting the Spanish settlements: in these voyages of investigation, he fell in with some minor Spanish vessels, and having gained a prize or two, it helped to repair his broken fortunes. He was soon after in commission, and reached the rank of captain; now, therefore, he determined no longer to delay the execution of that vow, by which he had called heaven to witness that he would requite his injuries on the King of Spain.

Pursuant to this plan, on Whitsun-eve, May 24th, 1572, Drake, in the Pascha of seventy tons, accompanied by his brother John, in the Swan of twenty-five tons, with no greater force than seventy-three men and boys (including the crew of both vessels), weighed anchor from Plymouth, then the most frequented harbour of England. The day was delightful; and as Drake set forth with his little armament, on so bold an enterprize, whilst the waves gently bowed their proud crests before him, and with yielding submission received the bark that was destined to perform such wonders on their turbulent domain, we may fancy the exhilirating hopes that played, like the beams of that day's sun, around his enterprize, and gave to the brave heart which formed it some assurance and presentiment of his success.

The vessels steered their course for Nombre de Dios, a town where vast quantities of wheat from Panama were stored to await the opportunity of being conveyed into Spain. On the 2nd of June, they hove in sight of the high lands of Sancta Martha, in America, and directed their course to Port Pheasant, so named by Drake in a previous voyage, from the vast number of birds of that description he had observed near the coast. In this spot, in every way convenient, he proposed to build up the pinnaces he had ready on board his own ship for that purpose. But whilst rowing towards the bay, he observed a smoke arise from the woods, and not knowing with what number of his enemies he might have to encounter, he caused a reinforcement of men to join him from the ships. He landed, when on advancing towards the woods, on a tree so large that, Fuller says, "four men could not fathom (en-

compass) it," he saw a plate of lead that had been nailed aloft by his friend Captain Garret, of Plymouth, giving him warning to depart those shores, as the Spaniards had discovered that convenient harbour, and his stay there would be dangerous. The plate was dated only five days before it was thus seen; and the smoke in the woods was found to arise from a large burning tree, no doubt set on fire by Garret to draw the attention of his brother navigator to the spot.

Drake, however, was not to be deterred from his purpose by the fear of such enemies, and so adopting a plan of precaution, (which De Foe, probably from this circumstance, afterwards made one of defence to Robinson Crusoe's cave,) he caused his men to fell certain trees growing near the shore, which (if a very old book that I am now consulting respecting the voyages of Drake speaks truth) were nothing less than "forty yards about," and with these he set up a wall that was as stout as his own heart, and would stand battering like a feudal castle. Under cover of this wall the captain and his men built up the pinnaces; nor did he wish, perhaps, for "more men from England," though had he done so the wish would not have been in vain; for here he was joined by his friend Captain Rawse of the Isle of Wight. The little fleet, with this new accession of strength, now set sail towards Nombre de Dios; and near the Isle of Pines they fell in with two frigates, of which they speedily made themselves masters. From some negroes on board these ships Drake gained intelligence of import; namely, that Nombre de Dios expected the arrival of some troops to defend the town from the attack of the Scy-

merons; a race of blacks who, driven by cruelty, had escaped from their tyrannical Spanish masters, and had formed themselves into a kingdom under two monarchs of their own choosing and people. The negroes, whose information was most important to Drake, he set on shore, so that they might join their countrymen, the Scymerons, and not have it in their power, by going back to their old masters, to give any intelligence of his being in the neighbourhood of his enemies.

Leaving three ships and the carrack with Captain Rawse, and selecting fifty-three of the best men, armed with pikes, targets, fire-arms, the old English bow, and the cloth-yard arrow, a weapon then not out of fashion, and taking also a couple of drums, with a trumpeter as herald, Drake departed on his bold adventure, and in five days approached the enemy's shore, where, having represented to his men the greatness of the enterprize, the richness of the spoil, and how much a determined courage would enable them to possess it, he prepared to assault the town at the dawn of the ensuing day. But as dangers are more formidable when dwelt upon in expectation, and are best encountered by that activity which allows no leisure for their becoming magnified by fear, Drake soon found how necessary it was to subdue the panic fast spreading amongst his people by at once leading them on to action, as their own scanty numbers, and the greatness of the hazard, seemed to depress every heart.

In this juncture he had recourse to a simple artifice, in the hope to render his men willing to begin the attack; for the moon shining that night with uncommon lustre, he persuaded them it was dawn

more than an hour before the morning light could appear. And soon had his people enough to engage their attention, and to draw them off from their fears: for a Spanish ship, lately arrived in the bay, seeing the movement of the English, sent a boat to give notice of the circumstance to the governor of the town; and Drake, before he could land his men, had to chase it to the opposite side of the bay. He then disembarked without molestation; but a gunner fled from his post on the shore, gave the alarm, and speedily the rolling of drums and the ringing of bells was heard arousing the inhabitants of Nombre de Dios to arms.

The town was without walls; and many of the people, surprised by the sudden nature of the attack, fled on the first shock, before their assailants, in every direction. Some, however, attempted resistance, several were killed, and a few taken prisoners. Drake obliged one of these to guide him to the governor's house, where the treasures of the mines of Panama were deposited in heaps. On entering this storehouse of riches, the first view seemed to realize all the extravagant accounts that had been brought home about the wealth of the New World; for the silver was piled in bars of immense weight and bulk, so that each man who might hope to take his share, considered his fortune ready laid before him, and needed but the stretching forth his hand to make it his own. But every one of these soon found wealth indeed a burthen; and that danger and death must be defied before they could convey it to the boats, and secure its possession. Drake saw the hazard and the difficulty of encumbering his people with booty that must retard or

frustrate their march. The pursuit of fortune, however, is not easily abandoned, even when the universal spoiler, death himself, stands ready to intercept it; and the number of those Spaniards who were now fast gathering in order to make a determined resistance rendered the case desperate unless the English acted more as soldiers than as spoilers.

At this crisis, it was not by the influence of reason alone, but of hope, that Drake could induce his men to abandon the El Dorado of the Governor's stores: for he promised them greater things, would they but follow him; he would lead them forward to the king's treasure, where gold and jewels, instead of silver, should become the guerdon of their labours. They believed and followed him, as he guided them to his brother, and stout John Oxenham (a fellow townsman of the captain) where they had already drawn up with their detachment, in the market-place of the town. But whilst Drake (who was now suffering from, and concealing a sharp wound he had received) displayed that courage and conduct which marked all his actions, the violent desire his men had shown for riches was suddenly succeeded by the frequent attendant of that passion—fear. The apprehension that the Spaniards would avail themselves of these moments to master the pinnaces, and so cut off their retreat, struck such a panic into their hearts, that they were now as eager to secure the ships, as the sight of the treasure had before rendered them careless about their safety. Drake, however, learning from one he had sent forward to inquire, that there was little cause for this alarm, persisted in leading on to the

king's treasure. In their march a most serious disaster befell them; for the rain poured down in such torrents that it injured the strings of their bows, and the matches of their guns. This misfortune produced delay; and delay brought on a renewal of panic, so exaggerated in its character, that they fancied, by this time, the whole country must be up in arms, and ready to rush upon them. Certain it is, from these repeated instances of a wilful indulgence in imaginary fears, that however brave Drake might be himself, he had many cowardly followers, who were as likely to ruin as to support a bold attempt. He saw this, and reproached them with their want of resolution to accomplish their own desires, when he stood ready to lead them on to honour and to fortune. The feelings of some were stung by his reproaches, and the avarice of others excited by the hopes he had renewed; so that all were once more ready to stand the hazard of the hour.

After ordering Oxenham, his brother John, and their people to seize the king's treasure, Drake led the rest of the men to take their stand in the market, so as to oppose the scattered soldiers of the garrison, who might otherwise become dangerous if suffered to unite into one body. But loss of blood from his wound overpowered the strong spirit of the leader; he fell to the earth as he was about to advance; and now was it first known to all that, whilst acting with such firmness and resolution, Drake had suffered an effusion of blood so great as actually to fill the marks of his footsteps as he moved. The sight of their beloved captain on the point of death, for no one expected he could survive

that hour, recalled their better judgment; and they felt that the life of a brave man was of more value than the treasures of Panama. All were eager to bear him off in safety; though Drake, restored to a sense of suffering by the strong drink they had given him, was the only man who expressed a wish that the enterprize might not be abandoned for his sake. But, for once, their fears had taken a right direction, and alarmed for their captain's preservation, not even his own entreaty could prevail with them to risk it. They tore the scarf he wore from off his shoulders, bound up his wounds, and with all speed carried him back to the boats, and thence to the ships, by the dawn of the next day.

They here made no capture but that of taking from the bay a vessel whose cargo was of wine; and directing their course to a neighbouring island, they reposed there a few days to recruit themselves after their late disastrous exploit. During this interval, a Spanish gentleman was deputed by the governor of Nombre de Dios to visit Drake, and learn if he might be the same person who the year before had landed on those shores; if the arrows he had used in the late assault were poisoned; and, if so, what must be done to cure the Spaniards of their wounds? This envoy acquitted himself with credit in his commission, and paid the captain many compliments on the courage he had displayed to the cost of the town. Drake, though he guessed him to be a spy, received his compliments with courtesy, sent him away with a gift of some value, and with the assurance that he knew too well what belonged to the laws of civilized nations to send poisoned arrows from an English bow; but that he would

never desist in making "reprisals on the king of Spain, by sharing with him some of that gold and silver which he got out of the earth in order to trouble it."

Shortly after this, Drake and Captain Rawse parted company; the latter having formed so ill an opinion of the expedition, that he desired no longer to remain a participator in what he anticipated would be an eventual failure and disgrace. His companion was too wise to be thus easily disheartened: for though great success may, by a concurrence of fortunate circumstances, attend the adventurous and laborious in the outset of their career, yet success, generally speaking, is like a coy mistress who must long be wooed, and that too through many a repulse, ere she is won. Drake knew well enough, before he saw it confirmed in the conduct of Rawse, that with common minds it is success alone that gains confidence and constitutes merit. Few are above the prejudices of the many: with them the question is, what has a man gained? not what does he deserve?—if reputation be his, it is well; and the way is opened to call forth and encourage his most ardent endeavours; since reputation gives power as it expands, even as those winds carry on the vessel, as they swell the sail, with which they only played before, and passed by whilst the canvass hung useless on the mast.

Drake knew how much his reputation at home, as well as abroad, depended on the success of this hardy enterprize: he would be extolled for its very daring if all went well, but censured as little short of madness if he returned back with nothing but a shattered bark, and loss of time and means. He now,

therefore, held debate with his own spirit, that never gave him other than bold counsel, and it impelled him to proceed.

Having learnt, from a black he received on board at the Bay of Nombre de Dios, that the richest of the Spanish settlements were at Carthagena, he resolved to make what sail he could to attack that place. On the 13th of August, the Pascha, the Swan, and the three pinnaces, anchored between the islands of Charesha and St. Bernard. Drake, on bringing the vessels into the harbour, observed at the entrance a ship at anchor. In this he discovered, to his surprise, but one old man, who freely gave him all the information that was required, and told him "that the ship's company were gone on shore that evening to fight about a young lady, who had occasioned a quarrel between some of them on board." He also said, "that, about two hours before, a pinnace had passed by with an appearance of haste; and whilst so doing, warned the crew to look to themselves, for an enemy was at hand. Drake having heard (before he received this intelligence of his being discovered) guns firing as signals in the harbour, gave up his design of attacking Carthagena; since it must be a hopeless enterprise whilst the town stood in readiness to resist him; so much had he calculated on that distraction which a surprise was likely to spread amongst his enemies, as necessary to his success. He was, however, somewhat recompensed for his disappointment by capturing a large Spanish ship and two smaller vessels.

Drake having found that the pinnaces, from their lightness and fast sailing, were more useful to him

in these seas than his brother's ship, and that he had not hands enough to man both the larger vessels, determined to accomplish by stratagem a plan he had formed to free himself from the incumbrance of the Swan, to whose destruction he felt certain his brother never would consent, as, being master of her, he had grown fond of the vessel. There was on board her a carpenter, named Thomas Moon, to whom Drake confided not only his plan, but the charge of its execution. This was nothing less than, in the night whilst all the crew were asleep, that he should bore some holes in the well of the Swan, sufficiently large to render her incapable of sailing, however much, like the bird after which she was called, she had hitherto floated on the waters.

Moon probably considered the captain who formed this plan was under the influence of that planet whose name the carpenter had himself the honour to bear, since, expressing the utmost astonishment at the proposal, he frankly told the projector he had no mind to be hanged by his brother for sinking his ship. But Drake, chief in command, gave him his word that a rope should neither touch his neck nor his back for doing this service, if it were discovered; and if not, certainly there was no likelihood, however musical swans might be in their death-note, that this would tell the tale of her end. On the next morning Drake invited his brother to go fishing with him; and as they rowed off, he casually asked what it was that made the Swan lie so deep in the water. Inquiry followed; when, to the consternation of her master, he found there was six feet water in the hold. All hands were set to work at the pumps; but it was too late to find a remedy;

and Drake advised that the ship, when all the stores had been taken out of her, should be burnt. This advice, though reluctantly, was put in execution, and the captain's project completely effected, for his favorite pinnaces were now manned as he required.

Not long after this, Drake departed for the Rio Grande, where he took in a supply of fresh water. Here they moored close inshore; and during the night were surprised by one of those fearful hurricanes common in such latitudes. So awful was the thunder and lightning, that it astonished and even filled with terror the minds of such of the crew as had never before witnessed a storm in this part of the world. Drake assured them it would soon pass, and be succeeded by a dead calm. This happened; but the calm brought with it a swarm of flies and mosquitoes that stung them even to torture, and proved worse than the storm. Here, on the next morning, they were descried by a Spaniard on the opposite side the river, who, mistaking them for his countrymen, waved his hat, and shook his long hanging sleeves, as a signal that they should approach. They obeyed the summons, but no sooner did they touch the shore than, finding his error, the Spaniard ran away; and leaving his plantations and his stores at the mercy of the English, Drake probably thought his vow of reprisals on the King of Spain extended to the subjects of that monarch, for he did not scruple to load his men with such a sufficient reinforcement of wines and good cheer, that they were obliged to build four magazines here, to contain the spoils now taken, together with those they removed from the ships, placing them at

such distances, that if one should be taken, the rest would probably remain undiscovered and secure.

During this interval his brother John had been in search of the Scymerons, those independent negroes who had fled from their Spanish masters, and set up a kingdom for themselves. With these Drake purposed to open a friendly communication, as only by their assistance he now could expect to accomplish the great object of his hopes. A place therefore was appointed by his brother, after an exchange of hostages, for the captain to hold this meeting with the leaders of the blacks. And this he found to be an island as beautiful as it was convenient; where, from the rocks that guarded the river, it was impossible he could be surprised by an attack during the night.

The acquisition of Spanish gold and silver seems to have been the great aim of Drake's reprisals on the King of Spain; since, learning from the negroes that during the rainy season, now set in, there was no hope they could draw up from the rivers the treasures they had taken from the Spaniards and had cast into them for concealment, he determined to wait the proper season for such fishing. But though in all these expeditions treasure was the object, I cannot fancy that a mind like Drake's could be influenced by the mere acquisition of metals, however bright and rare. It was the enterprise, the difficulty, the activity of spirit, the genius to form and the boldness to execute schemes that a less daring man would never have dreamt of, that prompted his purpose. The interest was in the danger of the pursuit more than in the profit to be gained by it: since, could Drake have possessed

himself of the whole wealth of Panama by quietly trading for it in the city of London, Spanish gold would probably have had as little attractions for him as the patient and calculating commerce by which it must be gained in drudgery and peace. He was something like the racers in the ancient games, who would not have stooped to pluck a laurel from the finest tree that ever bloomed, but who would strive for it to the death when woven as the crown of victory. Another motive might also have influenced Drake's eager pursuit of wealth: he might have found how absolutely necessary it was to acquire it in order to secure such assistance as he needed in carrying on his great and after-enterprises, which, at this period, he could only meditate upon without having the present means to attempt.

To return to the subject. In the interval that must pass before the cessation of the rainy season Drake could not rest unemployed. After, therefore, building a fortress of timber with the assistance of the negroes, he determined to cruise the pinnaces in those seas, and commenced his plan by taking a ship off Carthagena, but did not land on the coast. A stratagem was now attempted by the Spaniards to get him into their power; for one of his old prisoners, to whom he had given liberty, artfully came to him, as on a friendly errand, to offer him a supply of necessaries, in the hope that such fair promises might induce him to land at disadvantage. Drake suspected the snare, and avoided it; and not long after the enemy sent out two frigates against him, but these he compelled to withdraw; and, having sunk one prize and burnt another before their eyes, his prudence for once forsook him, as he

committed the extravagant act of leaping from the boat and standing *alone* on the shore, in sight of the Spanish troops; yet such was the reputation of his courage, the terror of his name, and the fear of his pinnaces, that not one could be found bold enough to venture to approach him with any hostile purpose. Such a single-handed exploit as this would have been worthy Don Quixote, or any of those heroes of the old romance whom he imitated; but Johnson, though he censures the imprudence of Drake in this action, observes that possibly he might consider it would not only contribute to heighten him in the esteem of his own followers, but in the opinion of the Spaniards, who were great admirers of chivalry and romance, and who might yield the more easily to a hero of whose fortitude they had so high an idea.

Finding the country in arms against him, Drake resolved to leave the coast of Carthagena for Rio de Heba, though so ill was he prepared for any new enterprise, and so much did his men murmur at their distresses, being reduced to a great scarcity of necessary food, that it was only by the determined spirit he evinced that he could induce them to believe the repeated assurances he made that, would they but follow him with willing hearts, he would find a way, and speedily, to supply all their wants. But they had not sailed far when sickness, the consequence of such hardships, began to spread among them, and the quarter-master, a very skilful seaman, died in a few days.

In this state of distress Drake resolved to return to the Scymerons, with whom he had left his brother and *his* people, to attempt an inland and sudden

attack upon the enemy. But this was destined to be the dark hour in the fortunes of Drake; for on his arrival at Port Diego among his negro friends, he learned that his brother, having been driven by the importunity of his men, against his own better judgment, to a rash attempt, met his death whilst boarding a Spanish frigate, and almost unarmed for defence. Not many days after he had received this melancholy intelligence his younger brother Joseph died in his arms of that malignant distemper which carried off so many of the crew. This was a severe trial of the fortitude of Drake, for so much did the sick at this moment stand in danger, that his sorrow was divided between regret for the dead and alarm for the living; and scarcely had he paid the last rites of fraternal regard when he was again called into action.

The Scymerons brought him word that the Spanish fleet had arrived at Nombre de Dios to bear off the treasures of Panama to the king. These treasures must be transported overland to the vessels, and possibly might be intercepted and taken by a vigorous attack. This, therefore, was the moment in which Drake could most effectually make reprisals on the king. Glad, perhaps, of an opportunity which, by the necessity of great exertions, would rouse his mind from the gloom that cast so heavy a cloud upon his spirit, he determined to lose no time in executing his premeditated attempt. With all activity, therefore, did he prepare for the enterprise: nor can we wonder at this, since, from the perpetual variety of circumstances, escapes, and dangers, that render sudden transitions of feeling as a second nature in the character of seamen, they are of all

classes the least liable to indulge grief with inaction. Probably no sailor ever yet broke his heart whilst on ship-board in the career of his duties.

At this juncture one of Drake's pinnaces, that had been sent to Nombre de Dios to ascertain the fact if the Spanish fleet might be arrived there or not, captured a frigate of the enemy on their return to the captain, and brought her, with all hands prisoners, safe inshore. The sight of so many Spaniards on board aroused in the negroes their old fury of revenge, to which the tyranny of their former masters had, in the first instance, given birth; and they now begged Drake to give the prisoners up to them, that they might satisfy their vengeance in the blood of these victims. Drake, who received the proposal with the horror it deserved, now assumed that command over his allies which he exercised at all times over his own people, and would not suffer a hair of the captives' heads to be touched, ordering them to be placed in his own pinnace for their security and protection.

Soon after he set out on his hazardous attempt, taking with him not more than twenty of his men (so many having been swept off by the fever), and about twenty-eight of the blacks, armed with weapons for hunting and fowling as well as for battle. In their march Drake conformed entirely to the manner of living of the Scymerons—resting at night in deep and sequestered valleys, where, not unlike the Celtic nations, they set up circular huts, thatched them with the branches of the palm-tree, and left a hole at the conical top for a chimney, and a small aperture by way of entrance. Some of these huts were found ready to their hand, having been con-

structed in previous marches up the country. The more minute circumstances recorded of this journey are full of interest, and deserve to be repeated, were they not too numerous to find a place in an account of Drake, which must of necessity be confined to the narrow limits of a sketch.

I must not, however, pass in silence the mention of one thing so much to the honour of our hero, that in his wanderings through these difficult tracts, in a land of hostility, he forgot not that Power which went before his path, and was as a shield to him against danger. The poor Scymerons had acquired some imperfect knowledge of Christianity from their old Spanish masters; but their faith, like too many Roman Catholic converts, rather consisted in an observance of the superstitions than of the spirit of their new religion. For though, as we have lately seen, they scrupled not to beg the blood of their captive enemies, they failed not to bow reverently before the Cross; a custom which Drake taught them to abandon, and in its stead to repeat the Lord's Prayer.

The greater part of their journey was indeed delightful, for they travelled through thick woods, and under shadowy palms that clothed the hills and sheltered the valleys from the wind and the sun, whilst they often stopped on the greensward and reposed, as the gentle breeze played upon them, by the side of some rivulet or stream that ran trickling past the green turf, and served them as a fountain to cool their thirst, or refresh their limbs after the labour of hunting their food in the woods. At length they arrived on the summit of a lofty eminence, where there stood a tree of such enor-

mous growth, that it was held as a wonder by the Scymerons, who pointed it out to Drake, and told him from its top might plainly be descried the North and South Atlantic Ocean—in the latter no English vessel had yet spread her sails. In order to ascend this tree of observation with greater ease Drake caused a flight of steps to be cut in it, and the day being remarkably clear he mounted to its top.

Thence he viewed with extreme delight the magnificent scene which, from such a height, was spread like a map before him. There lay the boundless Atlantic, seen in its most opposite points; that ocean of which fame had spoken with such golden promise, and had rendered the theme of wonder as well as of praise. The sight of *this* in a mind like Drake's, whose desires were even yet more boundless than those seas, for they compassed the vast globe, produced the most powerful effect; and as he looked on the interminable waters, seen in the distance as if mingling themselves with the air and with the clouds, he felt the kindling emotions of his genius. And as the vast and the noble are ever allied to genius, whatever be the object of pursuit, and (except in minds wholly perverted) can never be separated from some strong feeling of the Divinity, his emotions raised his thoughts to Him who had formed that august scene by which he was surrounded; and calling on God to grant him but life once to sail an English ship in those unknown seas, he declared the utmost desire of his soul would be accomplished. The prayer was heard and granted; for, God prospering him, Drake lived

to become the British navigator who, in the language of our great poet,

"First bound a girdle round about the earth."

Soon after this the captain and his followers arrived safe within a short distance of Panama, the town whence the treasure was to be transported to Nombre de Dios. Having gained intelligence by one of the most acute amongst the Scymerons employed for that purpose as a spy, that the treasurer of Lima would on that very night set forward with his mules burthened with gold and precious stones, Drake immediately marched towards Venta Cruz. Near this town they surprised a Spanish soldier, took him prisoner, and from him they received whatever information they required at this juncture.

The captain now commanded his men to observe a strict silence, to lie down in the long grass, in two separate bodies, one on either side the road, and on no account to disturb the Recoes who were coming *from* Venta Cruz, since such carried nothing but common merchandize to Panama, and the *latter* was the quarter whence came the expected spoils. He also commanded Oxenham to seize the foremost Recoe, and the chief of the blacks to do the same by the hindmost, as the mules of the Recoes travelled in a string, the one having a bridle of communication with the other; so that if the foremost received a check, all stood still. The Spanish drovers, with whose character Cervantes and Quevedo have rendered us so familiar, were at all times very fond of their mules, and not only dressed them up with a profusion of gay colours, but hung about their necks a number of little bells, whose sound, which they

thought delighted the ears of the animals as much as it did their own, gave notice of their approach in the darkest night.

Drake's orders had been precise, and so simple that it seemed impossible they could be circumvented: yet though it had cost him so much time, labour, and thought to bring his enterprize to bear, it cost a drunken man but one act of folly to upset the whole without plan or purpose; and so it is often seen in human life, in things of less as well as greater moment than Drake's reprisals on the King of Spain. Days and years of toil are sometimes spent with no other profit to the laborious than the secret and melancholy consciousness that he deserved a better reward than he found: when perhaps he may at length be on the eve of success, some cross turn of fortune, some cunning enemy, or some foolish friend may step in and mar all, leaving the luckless person to a renewed exercise of that patience which often outlives hope; for patience, though a great virtue, is not always friendly to exertion. However, Drake's patience, hopes, and perseverance, like his three favorite pinnaces, always held company together; and this night they were to be put to no small trial, after all his pains.

The accident which now occurred had its origin with one Robert Pike (a Tavistock man, and consequently a fellow townsman with our captain), and who, notwithstanding the foolish manner he acted in this instance, afterwards rose, by fighting and beating three Spaniards, who came in united opposition against him, to the rank of Captain; and by that honourable style was for many a day remembered in the place that gave him birth. Pike, deprived of

all prudence by the quantity of brandy he had taken, quitted his station, and prevailed with one of the negroes to bear him company, that they might display their courage by being the first who should sally forth and stop the mules without the assistance of their fellows. This act of folly betrayed them to the observation of a passenger, who speedily conveyed his suspicions to the town: the treasure was held back; so that when Drake and his people came to seize the mules, they found them laden with nothing but provisions, and learnt from the Recoe they made prisoner, that the whole force of the country was likely to be upon them. In this situation there was no choice but that of retreat, which would show their own fears, or to force their way to Venta Cruz: as the latter was the most bold and hazardous scheme, it suited best with the spirit of Drake; it was therefore adopted.

Within a short distance of the town they found stationed, ready to receive them, a body of Spaniards, assisted by a whole convent of monks, who were determined on this occasion to act as the church militant against the famous heretical Captain of England. No sooner did he appear than they called upon him to yield; a call that was answered by Drake with the discharge of his pistol; and immediately after he gave the signal for action. The assault and defence were conducted, on either side, with much warmth; but the English arrows were found irresistible; the enemy was driven back, as the Scymerons exulted over their defeat in shouts and war-songs of victory.

The inhabitants of the town were thrown into a state of the utmost consternation; to appease which

Drake, with a generosity like that which animated the warlike in times of ancient chivalry, not only commanded his men to spare all who offered no resistance, and to respect the sanctity of the churches, where no spoil was to be committed, but went himself and quieted the fears of the principal ladies, by an assurance that all of their sex he considered that night as under his own especial protection. So much did this union of courage and gentleness work on the minds of the conquered, different as it was from the unsparing temper of the Spanish conquerors, that they looked on Drake as something more than human; and a feeling of confidence blended itself with that of awe, which his hardihood and extraordinary success every where inspired.

Though Drake spared the lives and respected the feelings of his enemies, he showed in this exploit no mercy to their purses. The spoils, however, here gained he divided amongst his men and the negroes, refusing all share of them himself, and still looking to the treasures of the King of Spain for his own reprisals of victory; a prospect which neither toil nor disappointment could induce him to forego. But the safety of his crew was now the first object; and he felt how necessary it was that no delay should take place in his return to the ships. Still the march overland to the coast was long and wearisome; and one that required all his energies to render it other than a source of murmuring and peril to his people. In this emergency he took the wisest means to support their spirits, by showing in his own person how easily hardships may be borne where there is courage to meet and to endure them. In moments where all depended on sudden and ex-

traordinary exertions, we have seen that Drake could use even reproaches to stimulate their endeavours; but where the operations that lead to success were of a less exciting and more tedious nature, and required patience to bring about their issue, Drake used kindness and encouragement in his exhortations, shared all their toils, and even the pain of hunger with them, when want of food reduced them to necessity and weakness.

On their arrival within a few leagues of the ships, they found on the banks of the river Tortugas one of those towns consisting of huts thatched with the branches of the palmetto, that had been built during their absence by the Scymerons. Here the weary reposed; and Drake, anxious to afford them relief, sent forward his token by a negro to the master of his own pinnace, with orders that he should sail her up to him with all speed. The master received the token—a gold tooth-pick case—with a doubtful mind; for the captain had charged him to consider none as authentic unless his own handwriting also bore witness to its validity. The negro, however, soon satisfied his doubts by telling him that the English leader had scratched something on the token with the blade of a knife; and on more closely examining it, he soon perceived the words, '*By me, Francis Drake.*' The pinnace was immediately sent forward, and all the company finally uniting on the 23rd day of February, Drake hallowed it by appointing it as a day of solemn thanksgiving to Almighty God, who, after all their hardships, had thus brought them in safety together.

Soon after this Drake, being on board his pinnace, the Minion, sailed to the Cabezas, in order to seize

the treasure that he had learnt from the Scymerons was to be transported from Veragua to the Spanish vessels at Nombre de Dios. At Cabezas he captured a ship, and John Oxenham, in the Bear, also took another, stored, not with gold, but with good fat hens, hogs, and maize, or Indian corn. The last prize so well pleased the captain, that he determined to sail in her, and attack the Spanish fleet at Nombre de Dios. He was soon after met by a Frenchman, whose commander, named Tetu, begged he might be permitted to join Drake both in the expedition and the spoils that were likely to accrue from it. They set sail in company together in the frigate and two of the pinnaces, for the Cabezas, where they left the first-mentioned vessel, finding she was too large to pass the shallows. Proceeding for Rio Francisco, they landed, and ordered the pinnaces to return to the same spot in four or five days to receive them. Drake then set out on his inland expedition, accompanied by a certain number of his men, his French allies, and the Scymerons. Their way was through thick woods, and after a fatiguing journey, as they arrived within little more than a mile of Nombre de Dios, they could hear persons at work in the harbour; the hour being no interruption to labour, since indeed in those warm latitudes more work is effected in the night than in the day.

They soon observed the mules and their drivers advancing from Panama; and at that sight every man thought of nothing but the riches he was now to call his own: riches indeed, could his desires have been as certainly satisfied as they were formed; for the drove consisted of more than one hundred mules, each laden with three hundred pounds' weight

in bars of silver. The soldiers who guarded the treasure were easily overcome; but Captain Tetu was wounded in the battle. Yet now the treasure was won it could not be secured, for the victorious possessors of the prize were compelled, on account of its weight, to conceal by far the greater part of it in holes under the earth, or beneath shallow waters. For the present they resolved to return by the way they had come; and once more retraced their steps through the woods, where the French officer was obliged to stay, finding himself disabled by his wounds from going onward. Here some of his men remained with him, and one was lost or missing in the woods.

Drake and his company travelled forward to meet the pinnaces; but on arriving at the appointed place soon found cause for astonishment and dismay. No pinnaces were to be seen, but in their stead seven Spanish ships floating in the distance! At the sight of these not a doubt remained on their minds but that the Spaniards had received some information of their plan on Nombre de Dios, and these ships had been sent forth to intercept their return with the treasure. The pinnaces they concluded had been taken, and the torture used, to learn from the crew where the frigate and the ship had been left, in order that they might next surprise and capture them.

Thus did the followers of Drake, as they now stood on a hostile shore from which there was no escape, look on the Spanish ships riding before their view, and gave themselves up for lost.

Never, in any the most trying moments of his life, was the firmness, the presence of mind, or the hardy

enterprise of Drake more conspicuous than in this scene of apparent hopeless disaster. By a train of the clearest arguments (for he had that greatness in his courage which preserves the mind calm, and free from all embarrassment in peril, so that reason loses nothing of her power), he convinced them that it was morally impossible the pinnaces could be taken, the men tortured and examined, and the Spanish ships sent forth to secure the English frigate, in the short space of time that had intervened since they had parted on that very shore from their shipmates; so that it was still possible they might reach the vessel before their enemies could become her master.

The men, for the moment, were silenced by these arguments; yet nothing but the resources of a mind like Drake's could have instantaneously suggested the means of attempting the very possibility he had so strongly asserted. To a less fertile genius, the thing must have appeared hopeless under any view in which it was considered—they could not travel overland towards that part of the coast where the frigate had been left, for barrier mountains and impenetrable woods lay between them and it. They could not pass deep rivers or even venture on turbulent seas, for they had no boat; and to return towards Nombre de Dios, whilst the country alarmed would be in arms against them, must lead to certain death. Yet Drake, whilst his people saw nothing but these evils and their own despair, observed, with a glance of the eye, the trees that were slowly and idly floating down the river, borne along with the current towards the shore; and in these he saw deliverance.

With a countenance enlivened by the most confident and cheerful expression, he asked "Who would accompany him to sea, on the raft he was about to form with those timbers?" Nothing is more decisive in its effect than the hope, however slight, that suddenly visits despair. The most animated feelings now succeeded to the listlessness of despondence, and all hands and hearts were eager to help their gallant captain in the construction of his raft, that was to bear him and a few of his most determined followers on this perilous attempt. The raft was quickly formed; a rudder contrived to steer it; and, ingenious in expedients, an old biscuit-sack was converted into a sail, fitted to the light body of a small tree by way of mast. Drake now chose three of his most expert and resolute followers; and giving those he left on the shore the firmest assurance, that, if he survived, he would return as their deliverer from peril, he prayed God to calm the seas, so that his raft might ride in safety, and straightway embarked himself and his last hope on this precarious stay.

For six hours, such was the danger of their situation, the sea continually washed over them; and whilst in the hollow of the wave, they were frequently up to the chest in water; long they could not have escaped death, which, on any sudden turn of the wind upsetting the raft, must have been inevitable, had not Providence interfered to save them. The strength of all means, employed in extraordinary circumstances, depends not on man's capacity but on the power of the Almighty. With Him the wing of the raven became as strong and as swift as that of the eagle, to do His behests in the

preservation of a prophet: even so was the fragile raft of Drake, by God's watchful providence, rendered as much a vessel of safety, as if it had been formed from the oaks of England, shaped and fitted with the most consummate art, and armed with the thunders of her artillery and the strength of her bravest sons. The pinnaces—those very pinnaces considered as lost to the enemy—appeared in sight; but forced by the wind, that now rose towards night-fall, to a contrary course, they ran for shelter behind a projecting point of land—there Drake ran his raft ashore also, and praising God who had thus conducted him in safety through the stormy waters, he rejoined his vessels, and soon after received his whole company, with such part of the treasure as they had been able to bear off, though it was inconsiderable when compared with what was left behind. And now the generosity of Drake's character was fully displayed; for so little selfish were his views, that he made an equal division of the spoil taken from his enemies, between his own people and the French allies; Monsieur Tetu having happily escaped death, and regained his vessel. To Pedro, the chief of the Scymerons, he gave, as a reward for his faithful services, a sword set with diamonds, that the negro greatly desired to possess, but feared to ask on account of its exceeding value. Pedro, delighted with this act of munificence, which he declared would (by presenting it to his own king) enable him to obtain the highest rank and honours, insisted on presenting the captain with some bars that he had secured in the late exploit; but Drake, though he at length yielded to his importunity, refused to appropriate them to himself, but threw

them into the common stock, saying, "that where all had shared the danger, there likewise should all in justice share the benefit." Thus have we the strongest evidence, that though many of the envious amongst the courtiers of his own time charged Drake's enterprises with the guilt of piracy, a mean spirit of avarice could not have been the motive which prompted him to undertakings so replete with toil and danger; indeed, on all occasions, he was more mindful of the interests of his followers than of his own.

Returning home, after so many perils, he once more landed on the shores of his native Devon, on the 9th of August, 1573: it was on a Sunday, and though during the time of divine service, such was the desire of the people of Plymouth to see the man who had done so much honour to their county, that most of them ran out of the churches to meet him with the warmest congratulations on his way from the harbour.

Drake's return to England was never contemplated by a mind so active as his as a final repose from his toils; on the contrary, it was in order to mature his plans, and to gather strength to execute them, that he now sought the countenance of his friends, that their interest at court might obtain for him a full commission from the queen, so that he might sail an English ship in those unknown seas, whose distant view from the heights, to which he had been conducted by the Scymerons, inspired that prayer to the Almighty wherein he begged a blessing to accomplish his designs. Many causes, however, operated to retard his undertaking; for, like Columbus, he found princes sceptical, and envy

rife. Such, indeed, was the fame he had already acquired, that many were more disposed to pluck away than to add to his laurels; and those whose natural dullness and coldness of feeling rendered them dead to all the high hopes and vigorous imaginations of the brave and the great, had neither the faculty nor the disposition to comprehend his designs, and treated them, therefore, with indifference or ridicule.

So many obstacles might retard but could not conquer the genius of Drake; a genius that was far beyond that sort of talent which plays brilliantly on the surface of things, like a sunbeam on the waters, but has neither endurance nor vital heat in itself. Drake knew well what were his own capabilities; and if the world gave him present credit for them or not was to him a matter of indifference; since no man ever more eminently possessed that wisdom which is content to work by patience; to sow the seed in the certainty that, sooner or later, the harvest will appear, without standing to watch its growth, with an irritable spirit, if the blade is slow in rising or in bursting into light.

Great must have been the obstacles he had to contend with at home, since it was not till the fall of the year 1577 that he once more quitted the shores of England on that expedition which has given him a fame that will live as long as the globe he encircled shall itself endure. Though this enterprise was undertaken with the queen's sanction, it does not appear she took any share of the expense of the outfit; and here we find another instance of Drake valuing his gold and silver only as it served

him to carry forward his great and immediate plans; for the ships, five in number, were equipped at his cost, assisted by the other private adventurers who joined in the design. These equipments were made with an eye to the dignity of the nation which our great naval captain was to represent in his own person in far and distant lands. He took with him, therefore, costly furniture, rich apparel, a princely service of plate, and a band of the most skilful musicians.

The seas once more received him; but as if he were never to find rest on their bosom, so fearful was the storm that presently arose, he was driven back on shore with considerable damage. Yet the seas Drake treated as he did his envious adversaries, for he was neither repulsed by their opposition nor scared by their tumult, but ventured forth again in the hope of better fortune; and this he soon found, for the winds became favourable, and his voyage for some time was as prosperous as he could desire. On the 27th of the same month they came in sight of the Isle of Mogador, on the coast of Barbary, where, finding a convenient harbour for the purpose, Drake, now admiral of the fleet, erected one pinnace, out of several he had ready prepared in the ships. Here they were observed by the Moors who inhabited the country, and for some days a friendly intercourse was held between them and the English, which was at length, however, broken by the infidels; for one of the crew, seeing the Moors making signs, leapt on shore alone: he was instantly made prisoner, and carried up the country; when it appeared he had been seized, from some

apprehension that Drake was in command of certain Portuguese vessels, and had come thither to observe the coast previous to an invasion. This prisoner was afterwards released; and the admiral sufficiently satisfied himself in the visit he paid to the coast, by taking many Spanish vessels. They next touched at Cape Blanc, where the inhabitants came forward to traffic for fresh water, being in great need of it at that moment on account of the dryness of the season. Drake generously relieved their distresses, and would take nothing they offered in return. They next proceeded to Mayo, one of the Cape de Verd islands, where they found the people so extremely shy of them, that they ran away as the English approached, and would neither traffic with, nor come near them. But the country abounding with figs, grapes, hens, &c., they failed not to obtain plentiful supplies for the ships. Soon after they passed St. Jago, an island in which the Portuguese had gained a footing; and where they had treated the natives with so much cruelty, that many were driven into the most mountainous and rocky parts to seek shelter from their oppressors.

Quitting these islands, the fleet drew near the line, where calms and tempests for some time retarded their progress. Soon after they neared the coast of the Brazils. The inhabitants, observing the ships from the shore, commenced their accustomed magical rites, for the purpose of raising such a storm as would prevent their landing, and sink them into the depths of the sea. The barbarians made great fires, and offered sacrifices to the spirit of the tempest; who, on this occasion,

did not accept them, for the winds slept, and the seas continued unruffled, so that no mischief ensued.

On the 7th of April, however, without any invocation, the lightning, thunder and rain, caused so fearful a storm, that for some time Drake apprehended he had lost in it the ship called the Christopher; but on the 11th she joined the fleet again, and the place where the reunion of the vessels was effected he named Cape Joy, in remembrance of that deliverance. To trace the various islands and lands on which the Admiral touched during this adventurous voyage, with some account, however brief, of the inhabitants and natural productions of each, would, instead of a slight notice, require a lengthened chapter. And as the whole of this part of his history may be found so fully detailed in the voyages of the time, it would be presumptuous to venture upon the subject after them.

At length Drake entered the river Plate; but there so violent was the tempest which assailed him, that the destruction of the whole fleet seemed inevitable. In this extremity, anxious to preserve the life of the Admiral, Captain Thomas, of the Elizabeth, whose vessel was the lightest, prevailed with him to go on board that ship, and running her into the bay dropped anchor, and here she remained till after the storm. Not finding the harbour so convenient as they expected, on the 15th of May they left it for another, and Drake sent Captain Winter southward, to look after those ships still missing, and sailed himself northward; when meeting fortunately with one vessel, he bore it company to the rest of the fleet; but no other could be found.

And here, for the present, we must leave him, since this letter having extended beyond the usual limits, obliges me to conclude, though somewhat abruptly, with the assurance that

I am, my dear Sir,
Ever most respectfully
and faithfully yours,
ANNA E. BRAY.

LETTER XXIX.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Drake and his followers on shore at an island near the main land—Descried by the natives—They traffic—Honours paid to Drake by the savages—Token of friendship given by one of them—Drake sets sail towards the South Seas—Goes in search of vessels that are missing; finds them—Sails for Port Julian—Indians seem disposed to be friendly—Sportive competition with Oliver the gunner—Fatal consequences and affray—Drake awes the natives by the discharge of a gun—Transaction with Thomas Doughtie; slightly wounded—Drake continues his course along the shores of Peru—Goes to Mucho—Quarrels with inhabitants; general assault; Drake receives a wound from an arrow in the eye—Drops anchor in Philipps' Bay—Receives a friendly Indian, who offers to become guide—Captures a Spanish vessel laden with wines—Flagrant instance of Spanish brutality—Enters the harbour of Cippo—The Spaniards rush out upon the crew; they retire, save one, to the boats—Act of cruelty—The Admiral touches at Tarapaca; finds a Spaniard sleeping; takes from him a burthen of silver—Sail thence—Arrival at Lima—Steer into the harbour—No resistance—Name of Drake formidable—His successes—Drake resolves on the discovery of a passage from the South Sea to the Atlantic—Steers to the isle of Caines to repair the ship—Good fortune—Severe sufferings from change of climate—Drake encourages his men—One of the barbarians ventures in his canoe near the ship—Pronounces an oration—The crew land—The natives consider Drake and his followers to be more than human; would sacrifice to them as gods—Drake endeavours to prevent them—He prays and sings hymns with his crew—Powerful impression made by them on the natives—The English stand prepared in case of treachery—High honours paid by the chieftains to the Admiral; place on him the insignia of Hiebob—Friendly feelings of the natives and English—The Admiral at length leaves their shores—Steers for the Moluccas—Touches at Terranata, where he is received by the King, styled by Fuller "a true pagan gentleman"—Account of the King, his counsellors, and courtiers—Visit of the Chinese

nobleman—His history—Inquiries concerning the adventures of Drake; he relates them—The Admiral bent on a homeward voyage—Sails to the Celebes—January 9th, 1580, Drake and his crew in their greatest danger; they run on a rock—Drake causes his crew to receive the sacrament and prepare for death—Providential escape when at their utmost peril—Near the Cape of Good Hope—Return to England—Elizabeth dines on board his ship the Pelican; she knights him—Jealousy of Sir Bernard Drake—Quarrel with Sir Francis about his arms—The courtiers jealous of Drake—The Queen appoints Drake, Forbisher, and Hawkins in command—Drake takes the towns of St. Jago, St. Domingo, Carthagena, and St. Augustine, in Florida, from the Spaniards—Sends a flag of truce to St. Domingo by a negro boy—The boy murdered—Drake requires justice of his murderer; at length obtains it—1588, Spanish Armada—Drake's last voyage, 1595—Sails to the West Indies—Hawkins dies—Drake's friend, Brute Browne, killed by the Spaniards—The Admiral swears to avenge his death—Fulfils his purposes—Captures and burns two Spanish ships—Storms and burns Nombre de Dios—Dies at sea January 9th, 1597—Buried in the ocean—His character and genius.

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Vicarage, Tavistock, November 15th, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

SOON after the events lately mentioned, Drake and his followers, whilst going on shore at an island near the main land, were descried by the barbarians of the country, who made signs to them as if they were disposed for friendly traffic. On seeing this, the Admiral sent forward a boat with many toys and knives as presents, in the hope to conciliate them. Two of them advanced for a short space, but would not venture near the English, who, in consequence of this shyness, were obliged to suspend their gifts to a long pole which they fixed in the earth, and immediately after retired. The savages soon availed themselves of such bounty, and, on their part, left on the pole a plume of

feathers and a carved bone, as gifts of honour from their king.

Drake, pleased to find them thus amicably disposed, ventured to draw nigh, upon which the natives drew up in a line on a hill, and bowing to those quarters of the heavens whence arose the sun and moon, they thus let the strangers know they were received in peace. The accounts given, in the voyages of Drake, of the customs of these Indians, are replete with interest, but too numerous to be here stated in detail. They practised a more noble kind of idolatry than that of worshipping blocks of wood or stone, as they believed, from the splendour of their aspect, that the planets were gods that had power to overrule the destinies of men. Having no canoes, they could never quit their islands to reach so far as the main land, which, in this part at least, was uninhabited by man; for, on Drake sailing thither, the birds (unaccustomed to the sight of human beings, and never having known their snares) did not fly from but came to him, even as the feathered race had done to Adam in Paradise. The poor Indians of the islands he found as docile as the birds, and almost as simple in their habits: they principally lived on the raw flesh of the seal, not using fire in the preparation of their food. Their notions of friendship and affection were of the strongest kind, and this Drake experienced when on giving a cap to one of the natives, he was so transported with the generosity of the Admiral that, to express his sense of the favour, he thrust his arrow into his own leg, and let the blood run on the earth in token of fidelity.

At length Drake set sail towards the South Sea,

and soon after dropped anchor in a convenient bay in order to break up the Christopher. He now also became anxious to determine in what manner it would be most desirable to act respecting the Portuguese prize, which he had lost sight of in the great storm, as he could not endure the idea of proceeding and leaving his fellow voyagers, who were in her, exposed to so many dangers alone. After offering up prayers to Almighty God, that he would send a blessing on his endeavour, he set sail in search of the vessel, and on the very next day had the happiness to meet with his companions near Port Julian. Drake, in order to refresh his associates, steered into this port, and went on shore with some of them to seek fresh water. There was he addressed by two of the people, a race sufficiently formidable in manners and appearance, and of a character alike treacherous and cruel.

The Indians who had accosted Drake seemed disposed to be friendly with him, and even entered into a sportive competition with Oliver the gunner, in shooting their arrows, though theirs did not reach so far as the shafts sent from an English bow. Whilst they were thus amusing themselves another Indian joined them, who seemed less pleased with the strangers than were his companions, to whom he addressed his discourse with much vehemence, in his own tongue. One of Drake's men at this moment attempting to give the angry native a specimen of his skill with the bow, unfortunately broke his bow-string. The Indians immediately fancied he must be disarmed by the accident, and, artfully watching the retreat of the strangers to their boat, discharged their arrows upon them, and wounded

the man who had broken the string. He endeavoured to refit the bow with another, but received a second wound in the breast. The gunner Oliver instantly presented his matchlock, but it failed to give fire, and the natives, encouraged by these disasters on the part of the English, discharged upon them a second flight, killed poor Oliver, wounded many, and had not Drake acted with his accustomed calmness and intrepidity, it is probable every man would have been cut off. But he directed them to cover their bodies in their retreat with the targets they carried for defence; to shift perpetually their position so as to avoid the arrows, and to stop, pick up, and destroy them as they fell. Drake also seized the gun, which had so unfortunately hung fire in the hands of Oliver, and aiming at the treacherous Indian who had been his death, wounded that savage mortally on the spot. This circumstance effectually changed the fortune of the combat; for the barbarians, whose numbers had been fearfully increasing, retreated in terror and amazement to their woods, whilst Drake withdrew his men from the scene of action. In a few days, however, he had to perform the melancholy duty of attending the burial of his friend Winter, and some of his people who died of their wounds. He remained in this part of the world, without receiving further molestation, nearly two months longer, the natives having been literally awed into submission by the discharge of a gun.

I pass in silence the remarkable transaction concerning Thomas Doughtie, which took place on board Drake's ship in this obscure quarter of the globe. My reason for doing so is, that I find it

impossible to give it so as to make it intelligible in any abridged account, replete as the whole transaction is with mystery and the most contradictory circumstances. In its present state it is so enveloped in obscurity that it defied even the critical examination of Johnson, who declares "it is difficult to form any judgment upon it." But thus much surely may be said with perfect impartiality, that where there is such a want of clear intelligence, we are entitled, in a great measure, to rest our opinion on the general character of Drake, his known sense of religious duty, and his humanity to his people. Is it therefore likely that a commander governed by principles such as these would have executed Thomas Doughtie (whatever might have been his crimes), had they been of a nature to admit his showing mercy? Possibly, also, in such an obscure part of the globe, where the lives of all depended on discipline and obedience, it might really have been more merciful to the many to punish one, for the sake of example, than by an ill-timed lenity to spare him, and thus remove the salutary fear of the worst consequences, should any attempt to mutiny be meditated in the ships.

After a variety of perilous adventures amongst the savages, on whose shores he occasionally landed, Drake at length entered the South Sea, that vast expanse of ocean on which no vessel bearing the British flag had hitherto sailed; an achievement reserved for him, the happy success of which had been the great object of his ambition. But he was again destined to suffer another and severe trial; for so fearful a tempest arose that the destruction of the whole fleet appeared inevitable. During the

space of fifty-two days the ships were incessantly driven and tossed (without the power to spread a sail) from one quarter of the ocean to another, not knowing in which they should at last find a watery grave. Here they lost company with the Elizabeth, and that vessel did not afterwards rejoin them, though fortunately escaping wreck she found her way in safety to England.

For some time after the violence of the tempest had abated, Drake steered his ship from island to island in search of fresh water; till on the 30th of of October he steered for the rendezvous of his fleet. Thence, laden with a store of provisions, he continued his course along the shores of Peru; but not finding his vessels as he expected, nor any harbourage that promised safety, he made no stay until he reached Mucho, an island thronged by such of the Indians as, having suffered every kind of cruelty under the Spanish yoke, had fled thither from the continent for refuge. The savages appearing willing to entertain the strangers in friendly traffic, on the next day they ventured on shore for water; but they soon found how little sincerity there had been in their apparent cordiality; for two of the seamen going forward with the water vessels were immediately put to death. This was the signal for a general assault, and some hundreds of the barbarians, having crouched behind the surrounding rocks in order to conceal their purpose, in a moment started up, discharged their arrows on the crew that had not yet quitted the boat, and wounded every man on board.

The sea ran in such tumultuous waves, that to return to the ship was almost as hazardous as it

would have been to land on the shore. Drake received a wound from one of the arrows which pierced nearly to the brain, and another struck him under the eye. But notwithstanding the danger and the absence of the surgeon, who was in one of the parted ships, by the mercy of Providence his life and the lives of his wounded followers were preserved; a circumstance little less than miraculous, and evidently showing that when those ordinary means by which men are both permitted and enjoined to heal the injuries of the body fail, the arm of God is not shortened, and that he can extend it towards his afflicted creatures in the most marked and merciful manner.

Shortly after Drake dropped anchor in Philipps' Bay, where, receiving an Indian on board, of a better nature than those of Mucho, he so far won upon him by his kindness, that the stranger offered to become his pilot to a spot where all his wants should be supplied. Here he succeeded also in the capture of a Spanish vessel richly laden with wines, stores, jewels, and gold. The Indian pilot was rewarded and returned safe to his people, having, during the time he was with Drake, exhibited that mild and docile temper, so natural to his race before the Spaniards hardened their hearts and roused their passions by the cruelty and treachery with which they treated them in order to make them discover to their conquerors those mines of gold where they were destined to labour like slaves.

A flagrant instance of Spanish brutality that occurred shortly after, acted powerfully on the mind of Drake, and made him feel, if possible, a yet more determined enmity against the whole nation. About the end of December, he entered the harbour of

Cippo, where these men held possession of the town, and of many Indians who were no better than captives in their service. Observing the English land on the coast they rushed out in an overwhelming body, accompanied by their naked slaves, each of the latter armed with arrows formed of green wood; since such was their dread of the Indian captives, that they allowed them no weapons but what should be cut for some immediate service; disarming and maltreating them when the labours of the day were at an end. Finding opposition against such numbers would be madness, Drake and his men, saving one, retired hastily to the boats; when that unfortunate man left behind was seized on the spot and shot by the Spaniards, who, hurrying with his body to a rock, whence the savage exultation of their victory might be seen, they cut off his head and hands, and tore out his heart in the face of his countrymen, first insisting that the Indians should discharge their arrows over the body, and thus disarm themselves.

The next place at which the Admiral touched was Tarrapaca; where, finding a Spaniard asleep, with many bars of silver, weighing about four thousand dollars, by his side, they relieved him of his burthen without interrupting his repose, and left him to wonder, when he should awake, by whom he had been deprived of a care that more often breaks the slumber of the possessor than contributes to its security. Another Spaniard they met in their way was employed in driving certain Peruvian sheep, animals there used as beasts of burthen, laden with bars of silver. These they also relieved of their load, taking all the spoil with more than ordinary pleasure, as it

was considered a lawful reprisal for the Spanish cruelties they had so lately witnessed. The treasure was conveyed in safety to the ship.

Sailing thence they came to Lima, where, grown confident and even daring by success, they steered directly into the harbour, and to their astonishment met with no offer of resistance. But the name of Drake was become as appalling as his own cannon; and the Spaniards, cruel to a feeble enemy, were dastardly before a brave one; so that they now actually suffered the Admiral to take possession of one of their ships richly laden with gold, without the slightest attempt at defence; and had he been as evil minded as themselves, they would, with equal submission, have suffered him to burn it. A second great prize was the Caca Fuego, where they took gold, jewels, and fourteen chests of ryals of plate, and such treasure that it was the work of some days to transfer it to the English ship. Content, even satiated with spoil, and despairing of finding the vessels from which they had parted company in the great storm, Drake now began to turn his thoughts homeward; but ere he sailed thither, he wished to accomplish an object which would be of incalculable benefit to his country—the discovery of a passage from the South Sea to the Atlantic. To prepare for this enterprise, it became necessary that the ship should undergo some repair, and receive a fresh supply of water. The Admiral steered accordingly to a convenient bay in the island of Caines, and as good fortune at this time seemed to meet him at every turn, here also they fell in with and captured a vessel laden with rich silks and stuffs.

But an uninterrupted continuance of prosperity is

seldom the lot of public or of private men; and Drake and his crew were soon to feel a reverse which was indeed calculated to give them a practical lesson of how little worth are riches in the extremity of human distress; that some power, greater than that of fortune, is alone worthy the trust of a wise man, and should, therefore, be alone the object of his hopes. The first suffering they had to endure was a change of climate; for, having sailed about fourteen hundred leagues, they found the cold so intense that the ropes of the ship became frozen, and it required six men to perform the duties usually accomplished by half the number. As they advanced, the vital heat of the sun seemed entirely to forsake them, and their hearts became cold and cheerless as their limbs. A melancholy discouragement seized on all the crew, and in this torpid state they were in danger of sinking before the perils that beset them, without a struggle to overcome such accumulated difficulties.

But nothing could move the spirit of Drake to give way before circumstances, however adverse their nature; and blending the kindness of his generous disposition with the authority of his station, he reminded his people, in the most impressive manner, of the never-failing providence of God; and with a cheerful voice and countenance encouraged them to labour so that they might deserve the assistance of a power without whose aid their labours would be vain. Onward they sailed, till at length they found a convenient harbour, and dropped anchor on the 17th of June, on an unknown shore. Nothing could be more cheerless than the prospect before them. The land was barren, the trees leafless, and the

natives a set of savages, who seemed to look on them with wonder and fear.

One of these barbarians ventured in his canoe near the ship, and having pronounced with solemn gestures an oration in his own tongue, which, of course, could not be understood, he presented the English with a crown of black feathers, and a basket made of rushes filled with herbs. It was here absolutely necessary that the crew should land in order to stop a leak which the ship had sprung at sea. Experience had taught Drake not to depend on the peace-offerings of savages; he caused, therefore, in the first instance, a fortification of stones to be raised on the shore; within this he pitched the tents to accommodate his people. The work thus speedily accomplished, to a nation so wild and ignorant as the poor savages in the common arts of life, seemed little less than miraculous; and they now came down in crowds to worship the Admiral and his men, as if they had been gods. Drake, however, had too deep a sense of what was due to God to countenance this error; probably also he might remember the conduct of Paul and Barnabas, who, when the Greeks would have sacrificed to them as Jupiter and Mercurius, rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying "we are also men of like passions with you." Drake made them comprehend by signs and gestures that he would not receive their worship; and causing them to throw aside their bows and arrows, gave them linen and necessaries, showing in what way these things would become useful.

The savages, however, could not so easily be prevailed with to consider the wonderful strangers as men of earthly mould like themselves. Gratefully

receiving the presents of the Admiral, they retired to some distance from the tents, where they set up their voices in loud and doleful shoutings; whilst the women, with frantic gestures, commenced those fearful rites so common with the ancient idolatrous nations: tearing their bodies and their cheeks till the blood ran down them, or dashing themselves against rocks and stones in homage to the gods before their eyes, for gods they would persist in thinking the English must be, who had honoured their shores by coming down from the clouds to set their feet upon them.

Drake, shocked at such inhumanities, which he had no power wholly to prevent, commanded his own men to kneel down on the spot; there with eyes and hands upraised, he caused them to pray aloud to the true God, in the hope that these poor savages might be convinced, by the humility of the action, that there was a Power to be worshipped high above the heavens, and that they should not, therefore, bow down to creatures who moved but on the earth. After this, Drake opened his bible*, read some chapters aloud to the crew, and closing the book desired them to join with him in singing a psalm. This scene, touching in itself, greatly charmed the savages; and inspired the whole crew with feelings of the deepest reverence. Nor can we now reflect upon it without sharing their delight. The hardy seamen, who had spirits so bold to meet danger, to combat their enemies with undaunted courage, whom neither perils by land nor sea could move, thus humbly acknowledging their entire dependence

* Drake's bible is still carefully preserved at Buckland Abbey, a place about seven miles from Tavistock.

on God, and singing His praises with the voice that had so often mingled its rough sounds with those of the gale, was a spectacle calculated to affect all who were present, and no doubt with a merciful God the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving so heartily offered, was not made in vain.

Drake and his men having produced this powerful impression on the natives, soon experienced its effect. In a few days, the king of the country announced his intention of coming to visit the Admiral. The English stood prepared in case of treachery; but soon found they had nothing to fear. A servant of state came before the royal savage, bearing his black wooden sceptre, decorated with a chain of bone, and two crowns of black feathers with a bundle of herbs like those solemnly presented to the Admiral. The king himself next appeared, attired in a rabbit-skin jacket, with a cap on his head, woven with the feathers of various birds, and decorated with ornaments carved in bone. His attendants brought in baskets, so beautifully and closely woven that they would contain water, fish and herbs; these being nothing less than sacred offerings for the strangers. The sceptre-bearer made a speech which nobody could understand; and even as it is in many instances of speech-making in our own days, it was deemed not less excellent on that account. The speech concluded, the orator, king, and all the retinue of royalty, commenced dancing and singing with solemn delight; so that it was quite evident to the English, who understood action much better than words, that nothing but honours and kindness were intended towards them and their commander. These high ceremonies finished with the coronation

of the Admiral, who, with the consent of the legitimate king and of all his people, was declared, with the honours of feathers, bone chains, rabbit-skin jacket, and all other insignia of royalty, to be *Hiebob* of the nation, in one universal shout. Drake, however, did not choose to consider himself a king abroad, whilst he had a queen at home; and so receiving the wooden sceptre of Hiebob in the name of Elizabeth, he took nothing from her new domain but a stock of such provisions as he could get; and expressed his hopes, in return for the generosity with which these were supplied, that so harmless and confiding a people might indeed hereafter feel the blessing of becoming the subjects of Elizabeth, by being made members of the true church.

The utmost good will and regard subsisted between the English and the natives, though it was with extreme difficulty the former could prevail with them to desist from their barbarous custom of tearing their flesh in token of reverence and duty. Drake now ventured to inspect the interior of the country, in company with the king; and, to his surprise, found it to be far better than he had even imagined it possible to be. It was very fruitful, abounding with deer and rabbits of so extraordinary a kind that their furs might very well be considered as a dress fit for the majesty of the land. It was with extreme regret that these friendly natives parted from their new masters, whose kindness and gentle rule had inspired them with a warmth of attachment seldom equalled in civilized countries, and still more rare in those where civilization is unknown.

The Admiral at length steered his course for the Moluccas, and in sixty-seven days came within sight

of land. On the 30th of September, he neared some islands, where he soon met with a very different reception from that he had so lately experienced. Not liking the natives, he did not tarry longer than necessity required; but continuing his course, on the third of November he touched at Terrenata, where he was received by the king, whom Fuller calls "a true pagan gentleman." This king appeared dressed in state; he was of a noble person, of a mild, commanding countenance, and spoke with gentleness to all around him. He was attended by a number of old men with flowing beards, attired in white dresses; these acted as his counsellors, and had that venerable and grave appearance which inspires a feeling of reverence due alike to wisdom and to years. This "true pagan gentleman" welcomed Drake with every mark of honour; and as a proof of the good opinion he entertained concerning him, he told the Admiral that, "they were both of one religion, since neither of them worshipped stocks or stones as did the Portuguese." Drake was prevailed with to visit him in his castle, where he found three score old men, who attended upon the king as his regular council of state; one of these performed the part of interpreter, a necessary office in a place where much of the accumulated wealth of the sovereign depended on his commerce with foreigners. Here Drake observed everything was magnificent; cloth of gold, jewels, and riches, dazzled his eyes at every turn; and the very fan which the chief slave held in his hand appeared set with diamonds and sapphires. The castle had been erected by the Portuguese whilst they were masters of the town, though they did not long hold it in possession; for so great had

been their tyranny, that the natives rose and drove them out. At the court of this prince the Admiral met with an adventure too remarkable to be passed in silence. It was a visit from a Chinese nobleman, who having seen him with the king, came on board his vessel shortly after attended by an interpreter.

The Chinese, before making known the object of his visit, begged to inform Drake of the circumstances of his history which had occasioned his quitting the "Celestial Empire" to wander forth in so remote a quarter of the earth. He was a native of China; had been accused of a capital offence, of which he knew himself to be innocent; but not having sufficient proof of his innocence to satisfy the jealous court of his own country, he begged the emperor to banish instead of putting him on his trial, which would have been the same thing as sentencing him to death; and this exile he proposed should continue till such time as, by travelling abroad, he might be enabled, by Divine assistance, to prove his innocence in bringing back to China some information of such an extraordinary nature, that it could not fail to be honourable and useful to the empire. His terms were granted, and with this object in view, for three long years had the Chinese nobleman wandered, like other travellers, in search of the wonderful in various quarters of the world; and not till he had met with Drake did he see any likelihood of satisfying the expectations of his imperial master. He now, therefore, told Drake, would he but make him acquainted with his adventures, the relation of them would afford such a store for his memory, that he could not fail, on imparting it at court, to procure a full pardon from the greatest emperor on the face

of the globe. Drake gladly complied with this request, and, assisted by the interpreter, told all the "import of his travel's history" to the delighted exile; whose gratitude was so warm at hearing such wonders that, as the only adequate return he could make to the narrator of them, he offered to become his guide, and to secure him an honourable reception at the high court of the Celestial Empire itself, would he but steer his course that way.

Drake's mind, however, was bent on a homeward voyage; so leaving his history to be recorded by the Chinese, after the manner of his country (and no doubt a curious work it must have been), he bade him adieu; and after touching at more than one island, sailed to the Celebes, where a contrary wind impeded his course, and he became entangled by the numerous shallows that were found amongst the contiguous islands. Here they beat about till the 9th day of January, 1580, when, in the midst of smooth seas, a favourable gale, and in the full confidence they had at last attained a free passage for their bark, Drake and his crew in an instant found themselves in more imminent danger than they had encountered during all the various trials of their adventurous career; for, whilst sailing without even a suspicion of danger, the ship struck on a shoal with such force that all human aid was vain.

Drake, who never quailed whilst there was a chance left that, by the boldness of his example and the manly exertion of his authority, some relief might be obtained, now saw no hope but with God, to whom he looked, in this instance, more for eternal than present mercy on himself and his people. Death, and that immediate, was before their eyes.

Determined, however hopeless, to use every effort, he caused the pumps to be plied, and the vessel was found free from any leak. His next thought was, if possible, to discover if there might not be some spot where they might moor the boat, and thence drag the ship into deep water. In this emergency Drake would trust no one with the soundings but himself. He threw the line that was to become the hope of life, or the certainty of death, with a firm hand—but so deep were the waters that no anchorage could be found even close to the ship, and it now appeared that the rock on which she had struck started perpendicularly from the sea. Drake's hopes were gone, for well did he know it needed but the slightest breath of wind to lift the keel of the vessel, when one blow more must be the last. This discovery of a fathomless deep that would have plunged his men into despair, Drake did not immediately make known to them; he paused for a moment's reflection; but found no comfort in his own bosom, since escape from so many perils seemed impossible. In a little while the ship would be a wreck; if the men attempted to reach the land in their boat they would be swamped, or, did they gain it, a worse fate would be theirs; they would be murdered by the savages, for a more fierce and cruel race than those who inhabited the surrounding shores was no where to be found.

Wishing his people, therefore, to meet death as it became brave and Christian men, Drake called them around him, and with that impressive solemnity of feeling which his deep sense of religion never failed to inspire, he commanded the sacrament to be administered to all, and that all should on their bended

knees humbly and devoutly join in one common prayer for deliverance. This done, and strengthened by a brief though hearty repentance towards God, he once more earnestly enjoined them to labour, that by so doing they might speedily lighten the ship. Six pieces of ordnance were first thrown overboard; bars of gold and silver, those riches for which they had toiled and bled, went next to enrich the caves and treasure-houses of the boundless deep. This labour ended, there was no more to do but wait in patience for that moment when the present awful suspense should end in death. But now that every human effort was unavailing, when man had done his little all, and his prayers had come up to the throne of mercy, God showed himself "mighty to save;" as if he had audibly said to every ear—as the event proved he did to every heart—"Stand by, and see the salvation of the Lord;" for scarcely had their last hope deserted them, when the wind (which had hitherto blown so strongly against the side of the vessel, as she leaned towards the sea, that it held her upright against the rock) suddenly dropped; and the tide being then low, she reeled—in another moment she was in deep water, and cleared from that perilous rock which must have dashed her in pieces: Drake and his crew had passed from the certainty of death, to life and hope again. How few, as they did, have tasted the cup of bitterness, thus suddenly changed to one of blessing and of joy! Yet scarcely even then could they trust it. So deep was the impression of this escape from death on all the crew, that for some time they dared not venture to hoist a sail, but let the vessel creep along, as it were, amidst the shoals and

shallows with a degree of fear that kept them constantly on the watch.

After mentioning an event so interesting as this, I shall not dwell on those of minor import, which occurred at the several islands where the Admiral touched during the remainder of his voyage. At length he advanced towards the Cape of Good Hope; on the 15th of August, passed the tropic, and on the 26th of September, arrived once more at Plymouth; where he found, by the variation of the several climates through which he had sailed, that he had lost one day in his reckoning, having in all been absent from England two years, ten months, and a few days.

Drake, notwithstanding the wealth he had lost by throwing it into the sea, brought home sufficient to be the possessor of great riches; and his fame was now so established, that he was the delight and wonder of the kingdom; wherever he came the multitude thronged around and greeted him with the most enthusiastic expressions of admiration and regard. Elizabeth, who might well be proud of her adventurous Admiral, on his bringing the Pelican, which had so long spread her wings over the wilderness of the wild waters, into the harbour near Greenwich, did him the favour of a royal visit; feasted, with her court, on board his ship, and there conferred upon him the honour of knighthood; an honour then rare; and never was it more truly deserved, or more boldly won.

Drake, however, was one of those characters who can gain nothing by any external mark of distinction; his own untitled name would have been sufficient honour for him in his day, and posterity

estimates no man by his titles nor his bearings. Yet so much did our great Admiral underrate his own merits that he was desirous to assume the coat of arms of Sir Bernard Drake, a Devonshire knight, to whose family Francis Drake believed himself to be related by a younger branch. If our hero is to be blamed for feeling anxious about a thing so infinitely below *his* consideration, what must be said of Sir Bernard, who took high offence at what he deemed an act of presumption in one, in the poverty and obscurity of whose birth he was himself mean enough to see more cause for shame, than honour in the genius, the worth, and the eminent services of the individual that would hereafter rank him amongst the most glorious of his country's sons? It is said by tradition, that so bitterly did the silly Sir Bernard resent this affront about his arms, that he travelled up to London to complain of it; and whilst heated in quarrel on the subject, gave Sir Francis a box on the ear! The news was soon carried to the queen, who speedily devised the means of justly and severely mortifying the pride of Sir Bernard in the most tender point.

Elizabeth, fond of allegory, (and in her age it was the fashion in all things, serious or trifling,) now gave her gallant Admiral a coat of arms of her own invention: Sable, a fess wavy between two pole stars argent. For the crest: a ship, under ruff, drawn round a globe, with a cable rope, by a hand out of the clouds, with this motto over it, 'auxilio divino,' and this under it, 'sic parvis magna.' In the rigging of the vessel, the queen suspended *a wivern by the heels*, that heraldic bird being the crest of the proud Sir Bernard, and the cause of his petty jealousy and quarrels with Sir Francis.

Drake found, in more instances than the one above cited, that though he had compassed the world, he could not escape the effects of those malignant passions which are every where found in it; from the Indian, who, in savage society, knocks down his enemy and scalps him, to the European, in more polished life, who calls his fellow man his *friend*, whilst he often aims a secret blow at his feelings, or his reputation, when he can no longer injure him in his fortune. In Drake's time it was a custom, on receiving the honour of knighthood, to give presents in money to such courtiers as might belong to the household of the queen. Sir Francis offered his gold as freely as he had gained it; but many, not otherwise noted for nice or scrupulous feelings, indulged their envy and malice by the refusal of his gifts, affecting to consider them the fruits of nothing better than a pirate's success in a lawless career.

The Queen, however, judged more kindly of her Admiral; and joined him in command with other naval officers of eminence, Forbisher and Hawkins. Drake well repaid her confidence in his prowess, by taking the towns of St. Jago, St. Domingo, Carthagena, and St. Augustine, in Florida, from the Spaniards. During the attack on St. Domingo, he had landed a large body of men, and kept possession of the place for several weeks, and sent a flag of truce (intending to treat with the enemy) by a negro boy. So little did the Spaniard, who received the flag, respect the law of nations, or of humanity, that he stabbed the unfortunate envoy with his own hand on the spot. The poor negro fled; he had strength sufficient to enable him to return to the Admiral; he related the circumstance, and instantly

expired at his feet. Drake, justly indignant at such an outrage on common humanity, seized a couple of friars, who were already his prisoners, and sent them with a strong guard to the spot where the negro boy received his death blow; declaring that unless the murderer was given up to him, he would hang those priests and a couple more each day, till justice should be done. The Spaniards dared not trifle with the English Admiral, who they well knew would be likely to keep his word; the offender was therefore given up, and executed for the crime of murder; Drake obliging the dastardly Spaniards to carry into effect the sentence he had pronounced.

The year 1588 will be ever memorable in the annals of England for the defeat of the Armada; a force which, had it been permitted to succeed, would in all probability have been the means of restoring, at least for a time, the papal power in this kingdom; and it is not unworthy remark, that exactly a century after, 1688, the providence of God was again manifestly extended over this country, the landing of King William becoming the means of preserving to us our Protestant Church and constitution; and in 1788, the memorable struggle between Fox, the whig advocate of emancipation, and Pitt, the tory supporter of our civil and religious polity, took place on the bill respecting the regency, and once more the good cause prevailed, by the king's restoration to health, enabling him to fulfil the duties of his august station, and to preserve inviolate his coronation oath.

The chief command of the English fleet sent forth by Elizabeth against the Spaniards was committed to Lord Howard of Effingham, as Lord High Ad-

miral of England, Sir Francis Drake was Vice-Admiral, and Hawkins and Forbisher had each an eminent post appointed them in the fleet; which altogether amounted to about one hundred sail. The gallant conduct of Drake in this expedition is known to every reader of history; and so great was the terror of our hero's name, that the Spanish ship commanded by Don Pedro de Valdez yielded on finding with whom he had ventured on immediate contact. Drake continued chasing such of the vessels as had escaped the fury of battle during three days, till God himself finally defeated the enemies of England, by that fearful storm which sent their fugitive ships, little better than wrecks, back to their own ports.

The last voyage undertaken by Sir Francis was in the year 1595, when Elizabeth, desirous of destroying the power of Spain past remedy, in the West Indies, gave Hawkins and Drake command of six of her ships, besides which they had not less than twenty-one of their own. It was intended this expedition should be carried on with the utmost secrecy; a measure of prudence which Drake had never failed observing, when he acted singly, in his former voyages. In the present instance, however, discretion was somewhere wanting, for the King of Spain received information of their plans, and adopted means of defence even before the fleet had quitted the British shores. Sir John Hawkins, a man of considerable merit, unhappily died soon after he was at sea; and Drake being now left alone in command, steered his course for the coast of Porto Rico, a town in South America, where, whilst the vessel was riding in the road, a shot from the batteries entered the cabin as he was at supper,

struck the chair on which he sat, broke it under him, and killed his friend Brute Brown, whilst Sir Nicholas Clifford, another companion of his table, received a dangerous wound. Drake started up, and looking with sorrow on his fallen friend, exclaimed "Ah! dear Brute, I could, indeed, mourn for thee, but this is not the hour to subdue my spirit;" and, his heart swelling with indignation more than grief, he took an immediate revenge by capturing and burning two Spanish ships in the very sight of the castle. Thus were the Spaniards made to feel that Drake was still himself in spirit, though his success on the whole fell far short of his former achievements, or of his present hopes and expectations; as he soon found that the inadvertency or the treachery which had betrayed his plans led the way to frustrate them. Notwithstanding this, he was successful in his attack on Nombre de Dios, for he stormed and burnt the town; after that event he did nothing of any import; and this change of fortune is said to have had such an effect upon his mind, that it caused his death by bringing on a flux, which in a few hours put a period to his glorious career, near Bella Porta in America, on the 9th of January, 1597. On this point Johnson remarks—"Upon what the conjecture is grounded does not appear; and we may be allowed to hope, for the honour of so great a man, that it is without foundation; and that he, whom no series of success could ever betray to vanity or negligence, could have supported a change of fortune without impatience or dejection." It may however be observed (though Johnson does not view it in that light), that present vexation of mind, which differs widely

from the deep sorrow of a broken heart, might really have been the cause of his death, without any disparagement to the greatness of Drake's character; since it is well known to medical men of experience that momentary vexation, and sudden passion of any description will, in constitutions worn by hardships and varieties of climate, frequently bring on fatal attacks of that very disorder which carried him off in so short a time.

His remains were placed in a leaden coffin, and after the funeral service had been performed with every solemnity, they were lowered into the deep by his sorrowing crew, to whom he had endeared himself as much by his personal attention to their feelings and their wants, as by the example of his courage, perseverance, and generosity. Though Drake was not wholly free, perhaps, from some of those faults which his enemies drew in exaggerated colours, yet take him as a whole, and few public characters have left so fair, so unblemished a name. He was the scourge of the Spaniards, and by the just retribution of Providence they were made to feel that he was such in those very lands where they had acted the most abhorrent crimes to a poor unenlightened, and (till their own cruelties awakened their worst passions) a harmless race of men, capable of gratitude, and exceedingly docile, had they been led by kind masters instead of being hunted and goaded like wild beasts or slaves. Those who are eager to censure Drake for his piracies on the Spanish settlements in America should remember these things, as well as the base manner in which he was treated by the Viceroy (who was supported in that act by the King of Spain) in the very onset

of his career; when all the fortune, the result of his industry and his toils, in his first little bark was lost, not in the chances of an open and expected warfare, but by an attack the most unsuspected and treacherous. The "sea divinity," which prompted him to make reprisals, no doubt was too orthodox in the views of a bold and injured seaman, inured from his earliest years to the habits of the ocean, ever after to be forgotten or laid aside.

But if we view the character of Drake in its loyalty, its national pride, its unshaken bravery and perseverance, its kindness, so blended with a firm but not tyrannic exercise of authority; its generosity to his followers; and, above all, in its deep devotional feelings, which neither prosperity nor adversity, nor honours, nor riches (the great corrupter of the human heart), could ever weaken, or render even for a moment forgetful of his God; we shall not fail to admire the qualities of his heart as much as we do those of his genius—both were capacious; and, like his great and kindred spirit, Columbus, he was as humble and merciful as a Christian, as he was celebrated for his skill as a navigator, and for his courage as a man. There is no tomb in England to the memory of Sir Francis Drake, but his fame encircles the globe.

And so ends this sketch of our gallant townsman's life. My next will speak of another of our worthies; in the interval

Allow me the honour to remain,
My dear Sir,
Very faithfully and truly yours,
ANNA E. BRAY.

LETTER XXX.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Affecting story of a widow and her only son—Old Nanny the water-cress woman—Story of an eccentric old farmer; his manner of life and interpretation of scripture—Romantic tale of Sarah related—An old tale noticed by Baretti; his excellence as a writer; his letters fallen into undeserved neglect; his journey through Tavistock noticed; his account of the weather—The old woman's tale repeated by herself to Baretti here quoted—Cruelty of the Agent; his determination to ruin the inn; places the new bridge in a spot remote from it with that view—Baretti's just reflections on the subject of petty tyranny—Passage extracted from a letter of Mr. Southey to the writer—Traditions of Tavistock and wonderful tales, gleaned amongst the elders of the town—Joseph Glanville had probably collected from the same source in his day—Story of an old witch; a hare and a hound followed by the huntsmen—Heathfield, the favourite haunt of devils and spirits—Story of an old woman going to market surprised by a hare—The lamb and the dove—A Tavistock psalm-singer's encounter with the foul fiend—Another story of the devil, which shows him to be a great patron of fiddlers—This last legend probably a vestige of the Old Moralities—The Dying Miller, an old Christmas play, acted here about thirty years ago—The devil surprises a lad stealing nuts on a Sunday—Vestiges of ancient customs—St. Valentine's day—Old customs still occasionally observed—Gloves sent on Easter day—Washing clothes on a Good Friday sinful and unlucky—To wean children on that day lucky; also to till a garden—Shrove Tuesday, a noted day—Old customs—Lent crocking; old lines upon it—Roasting the shoe—Rose plucked on midsummer day—Superstitious notions about the days of the week—Birth of children—Twenty-ninth of May much observed in this town; an affray that took place on that day some years ago; called Garland day—Garlands, how made; birds' eggs entwined with flowers—The robin's egg not allowed—Robin held sacred—Children, their dress and sports—Midsummer Eve, ancient superstition concerning it—Creeping under the communion-table to cure fits—A vestige of an ancient

custom probably originating with the Tolmen—Cure for the tooth-ache; practised in the town—Magpie omens—The holy thistle; its properties and beautiful appearance—Superstition concerning it—Charms to cure the king's evil—Reading the eighth psalm over infants—Unlocking boxes—Lucky omens—Sun shining on the bride—New moon—Superstition of the Bible and the key—New corn—Plants put into mourning by a widow—Subterranean passage said to lead from the Abbey to Fitz-ford—Discovery at Fitz-ford—Story about concealed plate probably true—Mary Colling brings a letter written by herself—Story of a ghost that haunted Down-house—Old stories about Lady Howard, one in particular related.

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Vicarage, Tavistock, January 8, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE heard Mary Colling (who is a most intelligent and exact registrar of all the old tales, traditions, and characters of any note in her native town) tell a very interesting story concerning a poor woman, formerly of this place, the particulars of which Mary received from a near relative of the person concerned in the tale, and these I deem not unworthy mentioning to you.

Many years ago this poor woman (whose name Mary had either never heard, or had forgotten) was left a widow with an only son. She was very fond of the boy, and, as far as her slender means would go, brought him up with more care than persons in her station were generally able to bestow on their children. Whilst he was yet a little fellow, an officer in the navy took a fancy to him on account of his hopeful and affectionate disposition, and persuaded the widow that it would be better to let the lad go to sea, than to stay at home and be brought up a labourer or a mechanic. Reluctant to part with her only treasure, yet not wishing to thwart a proposal which she was led to believe would be greatly

to his advantage, she let him go, and looked forward with longing hopes to hear good news of her boy. None however came: year after year rolled on, and still she heard nothing. She made many efforts to gain intelligence, but not succeeding, at length concluded he was dead.

Finding the home where she had parted from her son, and where she had hoped to see him again alive and well, become melancholy, she left the place; and after wandering for some time with a basket on her arm, selling fruit and trifles by which she obtained a livelihood, increasing years made her determine to take up a more fixed way of life again, and she removed to Plymouth. There she now sold fruit in the market as a regular dealer. Having something in her appearance that was venerable, being very neat in her dress, civil in speech, and just in her dealings, the old market-woman became a favourite, and never wanted customers.

Many vessels put into Plymouth harbour, so that strangers were often frequenters of the market. Amongst these was a young man, dressed in a sailor's jacket, who was a constant customer to the poor fruit-woman. For several days he renewed his visits to her basket, and at last, fixing his eyes upon her with great earnestness, he said, as the tears started into them, "I like to buy of you, good woman, because I had once a poor old mother who, as I well remember, was much like you; but she is dead and gone."

The woman looked up full in his face, the fruit she was about to sell fell from her hand, as she exclaimed, "Good God! and if I had a son as old as you alive he would be your fellow, for you are like

what his father was at your age. My boy had a mark on his forehead that came from a hurt he got by a fall that he had when a child."

"Was it like this?" said the sailor, as he took off his hat and pushed aside his curling hair.

The woman could give no answer, so much was she overpowered by her feelings on finding the dead alive in her own long lost son. She dropped down on the spot, was carried from it with the greatest anxiety by her child and the neighbours, and on her senses being restored poured forth a blessing on her son, thanking God she had lived to see him once more; and now declared she had not a wish left but to die when so happy, and be in heaven. Her prayer, fervently offered, was, no doubt, mercifully accepted: in a few days, the young man deeply sorrowing, and attended by some of the ship's crew, who showed a generous sympathy in his filial grief, followed the remains of his affectionate mother to the churchyard in Plymouth, where they rest in peace. By what train of circumstances the youth had fancied her to be no more, so that she had received no news from him for so many years, I do not know, nor could I learn, but the story is not undeserving record.

Amongst the living characters that Mary Colling, to use her own words, "loves to be telling about," is Old Nanny, the water-cress woman.—"Mary," said I, one day, "you have promised to bring me acquainted with your old Nanny, about whom you tell me so many anecdotes. I want to see her: what sort of a person is she in her appearance?"

"If you please, ma'am, I'll show you, I've got her in my pocket."

"In your pocket, Mary! why, old Nanny is not a pixy, is she?"

"Oh, no; but I know you will not laugh at me for what I have done. But as you said the other day you should like to see Nanny, I have been trying to draw her picture for you on a bit of paper, in her tidy cloak, and with her basket on her arm, just as she comes to our house with one thing and the other that we buy of her. There it is, ma'am."

Mary put into my hands a little sketch of a whole length figure that, considering Mary who attempted it had, I will venture to say, scarcely seen any prints beyond those to be found in her own little books, and knew nothing of the rules of drawing, really did surprise me and Mr. Bray too; the figure had so completely the character of a market-woman prepared for her calling. I gave the sketch all the praise it deserved; for Mary is one of those to whom praise does good; it inspires her with hope and cheerfulness, and *not* with a shadow of vanity. "But, Mary," said I, still looking at the sketch, "in your drawing, you put me in mind of the Greek painter, whose story no doubt you have read; you remember he despaired of being able to depict the grief of a father for his daughter's loss, and so he covered the face with a veil. Thus have you, not feeling yourself equal to give me a sketch of old Nanny's features, very ingeniously contrived completely to hide the face, all saving the tip of the chin, under the poke of the bonnet. Now Nanny's face is the very thing I most wish to see."

"And it's as honest and as good-tempered a face as any you will see, ma'am, in a summer's day.

And Nanny's very good-looking, too, for one of her years; for she's up four-score years old, and that's a great age."

"Indeed! and yet you tell me she goes out on Dartmoor to pick cresses and hurtleberries to gain a living. Do tell me all about her." And then Mary Colling gave me Nanny's history as nearly as possible in the following words:—

"Old Nanny, the water-cress woman, is, as I have tried to make her in the drawing, rather short and stout, and looks the picture of health and cheerfulness. Her right name is, I think, Anne Burnaford James. Her grandfather was, as she told me, a clergyman, who bore a great character in his day, particularly for conjuring away a very troublesome ghost, and confining him in a tower; the clock of which has never since struck, as the old people of the country say. Nanny is a widow, and well known as a very hard-working woman. She lives with her daughter-in-law, who is also a widow with three children; and, like Ruth and Naomi, they will not part, and they worship God together. You have heard tell, no doubt, how many sailors' families lived about Plymouth and this country formerly. Nanny's daughter-in-law is the widow of a sailor, whose ship some said was lost, but most believe it was taken by pirates, and that he was killed. The eldest boy goes to school at Greenwich, the two others are very sickly, and live at home with their mother. She is poor, industrious, and honest; and what with old Nanny's hard labour and the little allowed by the parish, they all make a very decent appearance; and now the daughter-in-law has set up a little shop to supply poor people with trifling

things; and the profit of it helps pay the rent. But the main stay of the family is Nanny.

"Poor old soul! she is up with the lark, and oftentimes during summer she goes to Dartmoor to gather hurtleberries, called by the country people, hurts. And sometimes she's away to the woods for nuts or blackberries; or else to the hedges and fields for herbs and elderberries. She frequently rises on a frosty morning, long before day, and walks four or five miles to pull water-cresses, when the stream where they grow has been half frozen. She told me that one morning, after coming out of the water into which she had been obliged to go, to gather the cresses, her clothes were frozen about her. These vegetables and herbs she sells, and supplies persons who make elder-wine or blackberry-syrup. The poorer class have a great opinion of old Nanny as a doctress, and she is the most kind and useful person in the world to them; and does cures, and is very clever in dressing a wound. No one better understands the medical qualities of different herbs, which she says are too much despised and neglected by the real doctors. She finds many rare ones on Dartmoor; and always turns her apron before she goes there in search of them, because she was once pixy-led on the moor."

I make no apology to you, my dear Sir, for writing about such humble characters as these, because I know you delight in, and indeed, wished me to gather what I could gather, of "the short and simple annals of the poor," and in one of your own essays, you have given some most delightful relations of the industry and struggles of the poor, par-

ticularly in the story of Britton Abbot, and the lad who used to attend on his paralytic mother.

And now, having told you two stories of the virtuous poor, I will tell you another respecting a man who, in point of property, could not come under that class; though he had commenced life as a weaver, but afterwards turned to farming, and with very considerable success. I bring him forward here as an instance of the danger arising from presumption, when the half-educated and whole conceited take on themselves to interpret scripture after their own mind, and not according to the canon. As the story of this old man is notorious, known indeed to all the neighbourhood, there can be no improper prying into family secrets in here mentioning it. However, as what I have to tell is not to the credit of his memory, I will spare his name. His picture, sketched from recollection, full length *with the face*, (and I am told it is a good likeness,) I have been favoured with from the ingenious hand of Mary Colling.

There lived about a mile from Tavistock, an old man who was most eccentric in all his ways; strictly honest in his dealings relative to business, and would pay even a farthing in settling an account, rightly saying that a farthing debt was as much due as a pound. He was also an excellent master to his labourers; and such a lover was he of all the country customs, that whilst he lived he might be considered as the representative of old manners and past times. Every festival throughout the year was duly observed by him and his household; and his men working on the farm had their full share of all the sports. No house displayed such an abundance of shrove cakes; May-

day had its honours, and as Christmas was crowned with evergreens, the yule-clogs were noble, and roast-beef and plum-puddings feasted the poor; whilst all the games and frolics of that season were celebrated with the honours their antiquity required. There was nothing to be said against this liberal old farmer, excepting that he considered himself a profound theologian; controverted the doctrines of the Established Church, and in his advanced years chose to give a practical example of patriarchal living that scandalized all the neighbourhood. For after living forty years with his wife, he publicly avowed his intention of taking her maid, as his own hand-maid, after the example of Abraham; saying he chose, in this particular, to walk after the old law; nor would he allow, when his friends remonstrated, that there was any sin or shame in the act; seeing that he did not intend to turn out his old wife, but still to give her the first place of honour in the house. This beautiful scheme he carried into effect; but somehow or other, the old wife did not think her husband's illustration of scripture quite orthodox, and very properly refused to live longer under the same roof with him; and so she left him, to reside with her own married daughter. But no sooner had she removed, than the patriarchal farmer paid her the utmost attention, and to keep up her authority and rights, deputed the hand-maid to carry her almost daily the best things his table or his farm could afford.

The old man next turned prophet; and declared he knew he was to become the father of five children, who were to be brought up on his wife's knees, in all reverence to her, as in the days of Sarah and Rebecca; and five children he really had—for, as

an old divine says, "if we give the devil our ear to false doctrine, he will grant us our heart's desire in the fruits of the sermon that goeth after his text." The boys he named Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; one girl was called Sarah, and the other he wished to name Rebecca; but the hand-maid begged she might be called after herself—Mary. So the old farmer said he had no objection, for the child could not be called after a better woman than the Virgin Mary, whose life he intended her to imitate in holy prayers and good works. It is lamentable to think that this man died, as I am assured he did, in the full conviction that he had committed no sin, in his way of life, either towards God or towards society.

The most romantic story that I have heard of in this neighbourhood is one I am now about to mention. The particulars were related to me by our good friend Mr. H——. He derived them from his mother; that lady has been dead some years; but in her young days she was acquainted with one of the parties most concerned, and I am assured by Mr. H——, that however romantic the circumstances may appear, more like those of a novel than of real life, they are nevertheless unexaggerated and true. He has given me full permission to repeat them, only requesting me to suppress the names, because, though the actors in this melancholy drama have long since been in their graves, he believes some of their descendants may be still living. The events I have thus collected and am about here to repeat occurred about sixty years ago.

A person of this town, who was the owner of considerable property, had only one daughter; her Christian name was Sarah. From what I have

heard, she appears to have been amiable and affectionate, possessed of great personal attractions, and of mild, engaging manners. To her might be applied those lines, beautiful in their simplicity, descriptive of Emma:*

> Her eye was patient, and she spoke in tones
> So sweet and of so pensive gentleness
> That the heart felt them.

The attractions of Sarah were too obvious to remain unnoticed, and she had many admirers; some of a station and fortune that might have dazzled a less ingenuous mind; but her hand and heart remained free, till a young man of inferior degree, but possessed of great worth and industry, became attached to her, and was bold enough to apply to her father for his consent. The father refused to give it unless the lover could satisfy him that he was worth one hundred pounds to begin the world with. From the opulence of the old gentleman, and the known poverty of the youth, this was considered a mere excuse to get rid of his importunity; for as Sarah declared her only reluctance was the fear of offending her parent, there was no obstacle to be pleaded concerning *her* consent to the proposal.

The young man, who possessed a truly honourable mind, would not attempt to deceive the father, even to gain the most anxious wish of his heart; and he candidly told the old gentleman that his present fortunes were humble; he possessed no such sum as one hundred pounds; but he had health and industry, and that he hoped to gain it and many more for Sarah's sake. The father, on hearing this, peremptorily refused him, and forbade

* In the poem of 'Madoc.'

him all access to the house, though he had hitherto allowed him to visit there without restraint. The daughter offered no remonstrance; she submitted to the authority it was her duty to respect, with her accustomed gentleness; but it soon became evident that though her outward demeanour was calm, all was not well within. She was dejected, silent, and so low that what was then called "a fever on the spirits" ensued, and her state of health was considered very precarious. Alarmed at this, the father so far relented, that one day, after having closely questioned her, he intimated "that though he had so positively declared to the young man, whose presumption he censured for looking so much above him, that he would never consent, and felt himself therefore bound not to appear to change his purpose; yet, nevertheless, if she could not be happy without him, and stole a marriage without asking leave about it, he would forgive her, if she behaved properly when all was done."

It is needless to add that this intimation was not spoken to deaf ears; it was speedily followed by a stolen marriage, if so it could be called, and most likely all would have ended happily, but that there was another person who fancied herself concerned in the matter, and who now stept in to play her part in the drama. This was the young lady's aunt, (her father's sister,) who, from the many anecdotes repeated to me about her, I should judge to be one of the most remarkable characters in deliberate iniquity that I have ever heard of in real life, or ever read of in romance. This woman was a compound of many opposite qualities; some the most desirable, and others the worst that could be found in

her sex. In the first class, she possessed strong sense, an active spirit, a steady temper, and an indefatigable perseverance. Of evil she had a still larger share; a smooth insinuating address, the most artful and far-sighted policy, and was, in equal degrees, selfish, unfeeling, cold and proud. In her own marriage, cunning as she was, she had been mistaken, having married a man whose expectations she believed to be more considerable than they really were; she had a son grown up, an apothecary, but one of the Romeo and Juliet order; for his beggarly account of empty boxes displayed small practice and a barren fame. He bore also a very indifferent character, not having the art to hide his faults so skilfully as his mother concealed her own.

This lady commenced her measures about her niece, by persuading the father, for the sake of *appearances*, (that great object of little minds,) that it might seem to the world he had not really sanctioned such an inferior match, to hold himself aloof for a short time from his daughter, and by no means immediately to see her. The father was a very weak man; and as bold spirits, who are held in respect on account of their superior sense, generally awe such men into submission, it is less wonderful that he should have been silly enough to let his sister guide him in this unfeeling conduct towards his child. She persuaded him, also, that he had been practised upon; that the dejection and illness of the girl had been affected for the purpose of working on his mind to obtain his sanction to the marriage, and at the same time to secure an interest in his purse. She blamed him for what he had done without consulting his friends, herself in par-

ticular, who would have opened his eyes to the deception; and finally overcame his reluctance to follow her dictates, by appealing to his pride, of which he had no small share. His health too was declining; and he had all the peevishness that frequently attends the valetudinarian in age, when there is not (what, I fear, was in this instance the case) a deep sense of dependence on God, and that consequent resignation which a strong religious trust never fails to inspire, whilst it makes the bed of infirmity one of hope and rest. In addition to all this, the poor man had for years been in the bondage of female rule, in the habit of submitting more than was becoming to the arbitrary will of his very clever and very cunning sister. It was known to all his friends that he often yielded in the hope to buy his peace. The only important act that for years he had done without consulting her, was the indirect sanction given to his daughter to get married without his formal consent, and for this he was soon made to pay dearly, as the sequel of what I have to relate will show.

He agreed to act entirely in future by his sister's advice. But only half her purpose was gained by this promise. She knew, however much she might awe her brother whilst present, that nature was a strong advocate in a father's heart towards a beloved child; and she feared to trust him, did an interview but once take place between him and that child. Her part was now, therefore, to be played with the daughter.

Mr. H—— assures me that she was base enough, under the mask of friendship, to pay her niece a sly visit on her return to the neighbourhood; and

blamed her very cordially for youthful imprudence and precipitancy; but, as what was done could not be undone, she hoped to make the best of it; intimating to her confidentially, that she feared her father was so very seriously displeased at her taking him at his word, and running off and getting married so speedily, that unless very nice management was observed, she was sure he would never admit her husband within his doors, or do anything for him in time to come. This was a serious threat for persons so situated; and Sarah asked her aunt what should she do for the best? Should she go to her father, or write to him, or would her aunt, who had such influence, speak to him and make peace? She had no idea but that he really intended what he said: or, on no consideration, would she have left him in so undutiful a manner. The aunt used many arguments to assist her purpose, and finally persuaded her niece that the best way to act would be to wait in respectful silence the old gentleman's pleasure; by no means to intrude herself upon him, either by a personal or written application; and that she would say all that could be said on the subject, which was far more likely to soften his angry feelings, than any other means in the world.

The daughter fell into the snare, and forbore to write to, or come near her father for some time; a line of conduct which the aunt in the interval represented as highly disrespectful and unfeeling. After waiting a long while, and receiving merely such information as this wicked woman chose to give her, Sarah heard nothing from her father himself; and now thinking he had cruelly treated her, she gave way to some intemperate feelings towards him;

for, notwithstanding the many amiable qualities she possessed, she had something of the impatient spirit of a spoiled child when thwarted by long opposition. In one of these moods, unhappily for herself, she wrote to her father in a tone of complaint, and upbraided him with harshness for his unkindness, intimating that after what he had done, he was bound to forgive her and receive her husband.

This was exactly the point to which the aunt had laboured to bring matters; so that now, instead of making peace between the parties, she, on each side, fanned the flames of wrath; till at length, so open a war was declared, that the old gentleman refused to see or admit his daughter, and was as seriously prejudiced against her as her most artful enemy had desired he should be. His health experienced a yet greater shock from these troubles, and his sister now prevailed with him to believe that no doctor on earth could so long prop up his declining constitution as her son, the apothecary; and he had better leave his melancholy way of housekeeping, and come and live with them.

Thus both mother and son beset him, and he gave himself up entirely to their hands; for whilst one was propping up the weakened body, the other was managing the still more weakened mind. Harassed in spirits; injured, as the old man believed he was, in his tenderest feelings by his own child, he gave up all contention, and let his sister do with him what she would.

She next persuaded him that he ought to settle his worldly affairs; and to make such a will that his worthless daughter, who had in his old age brought on him so much misery, should have no cause to

triumph after his death in her own wicked work. She ought not to have one farthing; she ought to be disinherited for her punishment. Here, however, the cunning adviser ventured beyond the mark. The old gentleman, weak as he was, and in the hands of these vile people, was not altogether so completely the dupe of his sister's will as she would make him. He represented to her that though he felt, as well as herself, that his daughter deserved nothing from him, still her husband had been very unsuccessful, he had heard, in some speculations he had attempted to get on with in the world. She might have children, and they would be his posterity, however angry he might feel with their mother; nor would it be right to cut them off because of her ingratitude. When the invalid said this, there was about him a degree of angry resolution, which made his sister see it would be dangerous to contradict him; and all she could gain, besides a handsome legacy to herself and son, was a sort of half promise that if his own life should be spared, and he saw no likelihood of his daughter having a family, he might add a clause to secure the estates to his nephew, the doctor, in time to come. Well was he now nursed and doctored to keep him alive; and the will made and executed without a present fear of change. But deep was the vexations of the aunt when soon after she found her niece Sarah (whose husband was struggling to rid himself of difficulties, and to support his wife in the humblest way) was likely to become a mother; a circumstance that would effectually cut off her own dishonest hopes for ever.

Such, however, had been her arts, that she had

never wholly cast off her niece, but still wearing the mask of friendship, had kept up an acquaintance in an under-hand manner, declaring she dared not openly countenance her on account of the displeasure of her father, who would never forgive his own sister, if he knew she did so. The aunt, on the plea of anxiety for her safety, proposed that her son, the doctor, should attend his cousin in her coming hour; as he would do more for her than any other professional man, and it should be no expense to her as she was so poor. The son did attend his cousin, and the child was born dead. My informant assures me the same circumstance, the same doctor, and the same result happened thrice in a very few years. The hopes of the poor mother were constantly blighted, no living child ever repaid the sorrows of its birth; and a funeral, without the consolatory service for the baptized dead, constantly followed her dangerous travail.

At length old age and the father's infirmities wore him out; he was dying; and now, in the last moments of his life, he begged to see his child. Anger had long had its course, but death, that vanquishes all things, overcame even this bitter enemy of life, and he wished to see Sarah once again. Sarah could not, he hoped, forget the years of affection in which they had lived together; he would even yet forgive her if she would but come to him and show she was sorry for what had passed, and had some feeling for him on his death-bed. He applied to his constant attendant, his sister, in these moments of returning kindness, and asked if his child really knew his dangerous state. The sister told him she did; but persisted in representing the

daughter as caring nothing about her father, as devoid of all feeling; speaking harshly of him to all the world, and wishing only for his death, in the certainty she was heir to his property.

The daughter, also, on the other hand, hearing of her father's condition, (for age and illness had confined him for some years,) implored her aunt to intercede with him to see her before he died. But she always answered he would not. I am told that it was well known, even at the time, that on one occasion she would have forced herself into the room to see her father; but the aunt violently repulsed her, saying it would be the immediate death of him, if she did so. It soon became evident that the old man had not many days, possibly not many hours, to live; and now again the will was brought forward. His sister, seeing his extreme weakness, and his disappointed feelings, gave her an opportunity of acting on him, made a desperate effort to secure the inheritance as her own, without a chance of alteration, as she well knew the will of the dead must be final. It was the last struggle she had with her dying brother; for he still persisted that he would not disinherit his grandchildren, though his daughter deserved nothing in requital for her cruelty and indifference towards him in his last hours. To settle the question for ever, his sister now told him, what she declared she had hitherto feared to mention; namely, that her own son had attended his daughter in all her confinements, and such was the state of her health, it was impossible she could ever be other than the mother of a dead-born child. Even then the old man paused before he would sign another will, in the hope, the last hope, that his Sarah would

yet show some sense of feeling for his condition, and would come and ask his blessing and forgiveness before he died. But he heard nothing of her; there was no change; and a new will having been previously arranged by a lawyer, (who, it was afterwards very generally believed, had been largely paid for what he did on the old gentleman's death,) the unhappy father put his hand to it in the presence of such witnesses as they chose to call in. This will bequeathed the entire property, which was considerable, to his sister, her son, the doctor, and to their heirs.

The father breathed his last soon after he had signed the ruin of his own child, who was thus left in great indigence and distress. In a little while strange reports and whispers went abroad; and many things became known in consequence of quarrels and disputes between some of the parties most concerned in the division of the spoil. These reports could not escape the daughter's ears; and convinced in her own mind that, however angry her father might have been, he would not have left her in want had her aunt really acted the friendly part she had promised, the will became a matter of investigation, and was disputed by the natural heirs. It was drawn, however, without flaw or error; and the lawyer employed averred that it had been made under the sole direction of the deceased, whose long discountenance of the daughter, in consequence of her marriage, was publicly known; a fact that could not be denied.

The unhappy young woman, and her husband, whose little means had been rendered less by the expenses of law, now dropt all acquaintance with the

vile aunt and her deceitful son; and some time after she was the mother of a living child, who came into the world to share the poverty of his parents and the inheritance of their wrongs. Not long before the particulars I have narrated were communicated to me, I had been reading Johnson's 'Life of Savage,' the poet. That masterly work made a deep impression on my feelings, as it must on the feelings of every reader who is not made of stone; and I could not help comparing the continued course of unrelenting art and cruelty shown by this detestable woman towards her nicce, to that of the barbarous mother of the poet towards her son. How the mother of Savage died we do not know; for she was living when Johnson wrote his life: but in the tale I have to conclude, I can relate that the justice of the Almighty did not slumber; it never does, for though it may be suspended or delayed, it is but like those slowly advancing tempests, that fall the more fearfully by having gathered every scattered cloud into one tremendous mass ere they burst; and woe be to the wicked when the anger of God is delayed till he shall have passed from this world to another; it is then not as a tempest, but rather as the simoom of the desert that destroys for ever, and withers as it strikes.

The circumstance of *all* the children being dead born whilst the aunt's son attended the unfortunate mother, and two children, subsequently born, coming alive into the world when he no longer attended her, gave rise to whisperings and suspicions too dangerous to be openly declared. But the affair was never, I believe, in any way investigated; and if that man might be guilty or not guilty to the extent he was

suspected, no doubt he was sufficiently iniquitous in having connived at his mother's arts to secure him the inheritance, and he soon felt the effects of an ill name. No one openly spoke to him their thoughts, but all shunned him. The doors of the rich were closed to him, who, in point of wealth, was now their equal. The poor, however low, would pay him no respect, and few, even of the miserable, would ask charity at his hand; for, as superstition was then more rife in the west even than it is now, a saying went abroad, "that whatever money he touched it became cursed." His house (no longer, I believe, in existence) was, I am told, in a solitary spot; no servant of respectability would eat his bread, or take wages of one deemed little better than a Herod towards children in the hour of their birth. If he came into public, men shrunk from him, and left him alone, though in a multitude; whilst the mother, who was the original instigator of all this guilt and misery, met, even from him, that most just requital, an ill return for all the wickedness she had worked for his benefit. But there are spirits who dare act in the sight of God deeds that make them quail before the eye of man; and his spirit was of this class. Contempt was too much for him; he could not brook the public scorn and abhorrence with which he was treated; and he died, it was very generally believed, of a proud yet broken heart.

The country people, even to this day, tell the wildest stories about his funeral. One of them I have heard from Mary Colling. It is that the coffin which contained his body was so heavy that it required ten men to lift it. That his spirit never could find rest, and still at times walks, enveloped

in flames. At other times he is seen in company with that one great and evil Prince, to whom it was believed he sold himself whilst on earth, and on some part of the property he is said to have entailed a curse on whomsoever should possess it. Of the fate of the disinherited daughter I know nothing more than that she died in great poverty; and Mary tells me, when a child, she recollects seeing in the old churchyard, adjoining a portion of the Abbey (now converted into a Unitarian meeting), a tomb-stone much defaced, and half hidden by the long grass, that bore her name. If any of her posterity survive I do not know.

Ere I quit the subject of old stories (and pray observe, that in relating these I vouch for nothing more, than that the substance of them has been related to me by persons of sufficient respectability to warrant my repeating them), I shall mention one I have often heard related by Mr. Bray, who received it from his late father. This has already been slightly noticed by a most admirable writer, Baretti, in his letters addressed to his brothers, where he relates his progress from London to Falmouth, whence he set sail to Portugal, and so travelled on to Genoa. Baretti is one of those authors who, in the present day, have sunk into undeserved neglect. The natural and graphic manner in which he describes all he sees; his lively sketches of the different characters he meets with in his journeys; his constant good humour, and the kindness of heart which pervades all his letters, render the volumes that contain them so truly delightful, that we have, perhaps, no work of the kind that merits higher praise, or that would be more worthy reprinting in

these times of cheap publication. And when we recollect these letters possessing so much merit, even in point of language and style, as well as in matter, were written by a foreigner, they excite our surprise no less than our admiration. Having thus endeavoured to give the humble tribute of my praise to a neglected author whose books I have read three or four times, and always with renewed pleasure, I will state the circumstances mentioned by him.

After recounting, in his amusing way, his three days' journey in the stage-coach from London to Plymouth (a journey now performed in twenty-seven hours), and telling us how pleasantly he found himself situated in the stage with Miss Anne and Miss Helen, as travelling companions; the songs they sang to beguile the hours on the road, &c.; he gives us some notice of Plymouth, and then goes on to a town (Tavistock) in his way to Horse Bridge, whence he wrote the letter to which I allude, and then the passage from Devon into Cornwall; the Tamar dividing these counties. At Horse Bridge there was a little inn.

Baretti truly is faithful; and by his account we learn that, however things may change in this ever-varying world, our Tavistock weather is one of the most constant in nature, for he begins the letter in question with these words: "This has proved a *very rainy day*, which has made my short journey very disagreeable. At the town where I dined (that town was Tavistock), having nobody to talk to, and yet wanting to talk (Baretti was one of those happy mortals who find pleasure and information in talking to the humblest as well as to

the highest of their kind), I asked mine hostess how she went on in her business?"—"Very poorly," said the old woman. "I am very sorry to hear you say so, said I (Baretti always sympathised with the feelings of the poor); but how can this be, as the town seems so populous?" The good woman then told the Italian traveller her tale, which, as he heard the leading facts from *herself*, I shall here repeat by again quoting his letter.

"The old woman," says Baretti, "informed me that almost the whole territory of that town belonged to a noble peer (that was the Duke of Bedford), who never goes there (the present duke honours it, however, occasionally with his presence), and leaves all his concerns to the management of an agent." If Baretti heard the agent's name he did not state it; but I shall venture to do so, as the man has been dead for years, our traveller having written this letter in 1760. The agent's name then was Butcher; and, truly, by the old woman's account, he did not deserve one a whit more gentle, for she thus goes on with his history: "Now the agent by these means, from a very insignificant fellow that he originally was, is become a most considerable personage in the town, and plays the bashaw over almost every body there. Do you see," quoth the old woman, "that girl there? Well, she is a virtuous girl, and never would mind the agent. I will say no more: but he took something amiss in us, and declared himself our enemy."

He did indeed declare and prove himself an enemy to these poor people; for when the new road was about that time made over Dartmoor, it served him as an excuse for the erection of a new bridge,

which he contrived to have built higher up the river, so that it might lead travellers, coming from Moreton, Exeter, and Ashburton, to an inn he favoured instead of that occupied by the persons he was determined to ruin. The old bridge he caused to be taken down, and a few vestiges of it still remain on either side of the river. It was a very ancient construction, and led immediately to the house where Baretti dined. After the building of the new bridge, previous to its destruction, it must seldom have been crossed, excepting by travellers from Plymouth on their road to Falmouth, a circumstance which induces me to conjecture that it was standing when the Italian letter-writer visited this town, and that thus he found his way to the neglected inn.

"He is," continued the old woman, still speaking of the agent to Baretti, "all powerful here, and does right and wrong just as he lists; nor can we get any redress, as the justice himself stands in fear of him. Some of the townsmen, who have been wronged by the agent, as well as we, have gone severally to London to complain of him to the lord; but never could get admittance, because he is too great a man to be spoke to by ordinary people; besides that several of his grace's servants are in the bashaw's interest, and take care to stop all information. Every body gives a good word to the lord, and says that he would set all things to rights if he was but apprised of what is doing in this place*. To

* So he did at last; for Barretti adds, in a note, in a subsequent edition of his work—"The complaint of the inhabitants, as I was casually apprised since my return to England, *have* reached the peer, and the agent has been turned out of his place."

distress me and my family, the agent will have nothing further to do with any inhabitant who comes to my inn; and he has it in his power to harass many, and deny bread to many, having, as I said, the management of almost all the land in the territory, and many of them being the lord's tenants. Thus am I ruined," continued the old woman, "as I have no means of subsistence but such chance travellers as you are, and the road from Plymouth to Falmouth not much frequented. Not a single glass of cider can I sell to any body dependent on that man; they all avoid me and my house as if the plague was in it." On this circumstance Baretti makes some just remarks, and concludes them thus: "No such laws can be thought on by mortal legislators as perfectly to screen the weak against the strong, or the poor against the rich, especially when the subject of complaint is not so great as to draw the public attention, which is generally the case in those many oppressions that the little endure from the great. Innumerable are the distresses that one part of mankind would heap upon the other were it not for a law much higher than any you can pass. That law you must all endeavour to inculcate to each other that it may spread further and further; that alone will prove powerful if you keep it; but if you despise or neglect it, none else will be much conducive to the suppression and extinction of petty tyranny. Thus did I go on moralizing the whole afternoon, closely shut up in my chaise because of the rain. This inn (at Horse Bridge where he wrote the letter) is the last place in Devonshire. To-morrow I shall be in Cornwall by break of day."

Having space left, and the epistle itself being of a very miscellaneous nature, I propose finishing it with some "disjointed chat" on matters I have collected *in obedience to you;* and that is the best apology I can offer for sending what follows. Do you remember a letter I had the pleasure of receiving from Keswick, dated February 6th, 1832? I have just taken it from a certain collection, equally valuable and prized by us, in a little old-fashioned box, where, safe under lock and key, it rests secure from all autograph thieves. In the letter, to which I allude, there is this passage, that I here give in case you should have forgotten it:—"Gather up all the traditions you can, and even the nursery songs: no one can tell of what value they may prove to an antiquary. The Danes have a collection of such traditions in two volumes—every local story, wise or silly, that could be collected—and a very curious book it is: my son and I are just coming to the end of it in our lessons. There is matter enough in such things for fancy and for reflection, to point a moral, or work up into a poem, and not unfrequently to elucidate something in the history of former times. Mary Colling may be a very useful helpmate." And so Mary has been; and by and bye I shall give more than one proof of it, for I am now going to tell some wonderful tales, that I hope you will not find less so than those contained in the Danish book, and not a whit less marvellous than such as I have already told—

> "——————— of fairy elves,
> Whose midnight revels by a forest side,
> Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
> Or dreams he sees; while over head the moon
> Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
> Wheels her pale course."

My tales, however, now are anything but of a lightsome character—they are of "midnight hags" who do "deeds without a name." These have been gleaned amongst the elders of Tavistock and its vicinity, and are purely traditional; but I do not believe that I am the *first* gleaner, for I rather think that a learned author, Joseph Glanville, famous for his "Booke on Wytches," has been beforehand with me in Tavistock, and no wonder. This country was well known to him; he was born at Plymouth (I wish it had been here, that I might have had to write his life), and was of a branch of the celebrated Glanville family of Kilworthy; and I doubt not must have been, from that circumstance, a frequent visitant in our town and neighbourhood, and there he was no idle listener to old tales I will warrant. Though it is some time since I saw his work, and I expected to see the candles burn blue, and the cats begin to dance, even like his own, whilst reading it; yet I have a very, very strong recollection of a certain story of devilry in it so similar to one still told by the elders of the place, that I cannot help believing it is in substance the same, or founded on the same. Had Glanville's book been common here, I should have thought the good people had borrowed this story from it to convert it into a tradition (for I have had experience, as will be told anon, they can do such things now and then), but from a very minute and lawyer-like sifting of evidence, I am disposed to acquit the Tavistock folk, and to pronounce that Joseph Glanville did, even what I am now doing, pick their brains about their old tales as ingeniuosly as he could to help out his book. One advantage he had, which I have not had, he had seen the devil himself, I believe, and

was therefore more likely to be correctly informed in all the most minute points of his history.

Now here follows the tale about which I have been talking, as it is told by our old people:—

An old witch, in days of yore, lived in this neighbourhood; and whenever she wanted money, she would assume the shape of a hare, and would send out her grandson to tell a certain huntsman who lived hard by, that he had seen a hare sitting at such a particular spot, for which he always received the reward of sixpence. After this deception had many times been practised, the dogs turned out, the hare pursued, often seen, but never caught, a sportsman of the party began to suspect, in the language of tradition, "that the devil was in the dance," and there would be no end to it. The matter was discussed, a justice consulted, and a clergyman to boot; and it was thought that, however clever the devil might be, law and church combined would be more than a match for him. It was therefore agreed that, as the boy was singularly regular in the hour at which he came to announce the sight of the hare, all should be in readiness for a start the instant such information was given: and a neighbour of the witch, nothing friendly to her, promised to let the parties know directly when the old woman and her grandson left the cottage and went off together; the one to be hunted, and the other to set on the hunt.

The news came, the hounds were unkennelled, and huntsmen and sportsmen set off with surprising speed. The witch, now a hare, and her little colleague in iniquity, did not expect so very speedy a turn out; so that the game was pursued at a des-

perate rate, and the boy, forgetting himself in a moment of alarm, was heard to exclaim, "Run, Granny, run; run for your life!" At last the pursuers lost the hare, and she once more got safe into the cottage by a little hole in the bottom of the door; but not large enough to admit a hound in chase. The huntsman, all the squires with their train, lent a hand to break open the door, but could not do it till the parson and the justice came up; but as law and church were certainly designed to break through iniquity, even so did they now succeed in bursting the magic bonds that opposed them. Up stairs they all went. There they found the old hag bleeding, and covered with wounds, and still out of breath. She denied she was a hare, and railed at the whole party. "Call up the hounds," said the huntsman, "and let us see what they take her to be; may be we may yet have another hunt."

On hearing this, the old woman cried quarter. The boy dropt on his knees, and begged hard for mercy—mercy was granted on condition of its being received together with a good whipping; and the huntsman, having long practised amongst the hounds, now tried his hand on their game. Thus, the old woman escaped a worse fate for the time present; but on being afterwards put on her trial for bewitching a young woman, and making her spit pins, the tale just told was given as evidence against her, before a particularly learned judge, and a remarkably sagacious jury, and the old woman finished her days, like a martyr, at the stake.

But our neighbourhood is much too rich in old tales, to have merely *one* to tell about hounds and

witches. If the last is not sufficiently wonderful, what think you of this?

There is a place near our town called Heathfield—a large, lone waste, gloomy and solitary, and all that—I will, however, spare you this time a grand description, without promising always to be so considerate when that great temptation to writers occurs of showing "a fine style," and being very mystical. Heathfield was then just such a place as evil spirits delight in; where if people really see nothing, it is quite dreary and vast enough to fancy they see a great deal, which, in these sort of cases, is much the same thing. On Heathfield the devils dance; I do not know who is the piper, as we have here no Tam o' Shanter to tell us; but I suppose the company are not without musicians; and I have sometimes thought they troubled our town band; and gave them a few hints in the "concord of sweet sounds," sweet to those who like them, but marvellous harsh to all other ears.

Now, as the "old tale goes," there was once upon a time (a mode of dating which all tellers of such tales as mine should never fail to employ, as it sets aside any small cavils that might arise from those awkward points in settling *real facts*, that depend on chronology)—once upon a time then, there was an old woman (and who will deny a fact like that?) and she made a slight mistake, I do not know how, and got up at midnight, thinking it to be morning. Had she lived in London in our days, this would not have happened, midnight, in that great city, being the hour that both old and young go to bed. This good woman mounted her horse, and set off, panniers, cloak and all, on her way to market. Anon

she heard a cry of hounds, and soon perceived a hare rapidly making towards her. The hare, however, took a turn and a leap, and got on the top of the hedge, as if it would say, "come, catch me," to the old woman. She liked such hunting as this very well, put forth her hand, secured the game, and popped it into the panniers, covered it over, and rode forward. She had not gone far, when great was her alarm on perceiving in the midst of the dismal and solitary waste of Heathfield, advancing at full pace, a headless horse, bearing a black and grim rider, with horns sprouting from under a little jockey cap; and having a cloven foot thrust into one stirrup. He was surrounded by a pack of hounds, thus noticed by Mary Colling in her letter, printed in the little book, to her sister Anne,

> "Of hounds on Heathfield seen to rise,
> With horned heads and flaming eyes."

They had, according to tradition, tails too, that whisked about and shone like fire, as the air itself had a strong sulphurous scent. These were signs not to be mistaken; and the poor old woman knew in a moment, that huntsman and hounds were taking a ride from the regions below. But it soon appeared that however clever the devil might be, he was no conjurer; for he very civilly asked the old lady if she could set him right, and point out which way the hare was flown? Probably she thought it no harm to return the father of lies an answer in his own coin, so she boldly gave him a negative; and he rode on, nothing suspecting the cheat. When he was out of sight, she soon perceived the hare in the panniers began to move, when, to her utter amazement, arose a beautiful young lady, all in white, who

thus addressed her preserver:—"Good dame, I admire your courage; and thank you for the kindness with which you have saved me from a state of suffering that must not be told to human ears. Do not start when I tell you that I am not an inhabitant of the earth. For a great crime committed during the time I dwelt upon it, I was doomed, as a punishment in the other world, to be constantly pursued either above or below ground by evil spirits, until I could get behind their tails, whilst they passed on in search of me. This difficult object, by your means, I have now happily effected; and as a reward for your kindness, I promise that all your hens shall lay two eggs instead of one, and that your cows shall yield the most plentiful store of milk all the year round; that you shall talk twice as much as you ever did before, and your husband stand no chance in any matter between you to be settled by the tongue. But beware of the devil, and don't grumble about tithes; for my enemy and yours may do you an ill turn when he finds out you were clever enough to cheat even him; since, like all great impostors, he does not like to be cheated himself. He can assume all shapes, excepting those of the lamb and the dove."

The lady in white vanished, as all such white ladies ought to do; the old market-woman found the best possible luck that morning in her traffic; and to this day the story goes in our town, that from the Saviour of the world having hallowed the form of the lamb, and the Holy Ghost that of the dove, they can never be assumed by the mortal enemy of the human race under any circumstances.

One other story or two about his Satanic majesty, and I have done; not doubting that those who are

followers of the "Satanic-school" in prose or verse will feel particularly obliged to me for these most authentic records of the prince they serve; though possibly they may not extend his empire quite so much as their own labours; as my tales represent the devil in no very sentimentalv iew, but rather tend to show him unmasked. And now for another story.

Many years ago there lived in this town a celebrated singer, belonging to the choir of our church; for Tavistock church, I take this opportunity of saying, has been, and is still, very famous for its choir, possessing a good organ to accompany the singers*. This person was rather apt to take a cup too much in the convivial society of his friends. One night, returning very tipsy from the village of Horrabridge, the donkey on which he rode suddenly became frisky; and to the utter dismay of his rider, set off and ran as never donkey ran before, leaping and kicking, towards a certain spot, were tipsy Tom saw a company of goblin spirits (and this is not unlike 'Tam o' Shanter's' adventure) dancing and frisking all in a ring. Having no mind to join the dance, Tom, somewhat restored to his senses by terror, laid about him most heartily, giving many a kick and cuff to the beast's sides and ears, and eagerly exclaimed, "Stop, Mr. Devil, stop, I say; I am a

* It would be a great omission to name the choir without some particular mention of Miss Elizabeth Greco; a young lady for whom I entertain much esteem. If placed in more fortunate circumstances than those of vocalist in a country town, she would rank with the first singers of her day, and would be an ornament to St. Paul's or the Abbey. So rich and beautiful is her voice, so feeling and noble her expression in the anthems of Handel, that it raises the mind and affects the heart to listen to her. Since this note was written Miss Elizabeth Greco has left Tavistock for Ireland.

righteous man, and a psalm-singer to boot in Tavistock church; stop, or I'll give you such a stave as shall startle all the devils in hell." With that Tom set up his pipes; and the donkey sprite not enduring to hear such melody, which exceeded even his own braying, sent the rider off his back into the next ditch, where he was found by a neighbour; and telling his adventure, as an excuse for a black eye, he received the honorary title of "psalm-singer to Old Nick," all the rest of his days.

Another story we have concerning his Satanic majesty shows him to be a great patron of fiddlers. Whenever he appeared before any one of these, he generally came in the shape of a gentleman, dressed in black, with white ruffles round his wrists; and he usually made so liberal a bargain that the sons of harmony were much pleased with him; till they now and then happened to spy the cloven foot, a thing which he, like many other gentlemen of fashion, had no power to hide even in the best company.

Now, the story goes, that in the time of the monks, a certain fiddler guessed with whom he had made some such bargain, and went to consult one of those ghostly brothers what he had best do for safety. The monk told the fiddler to act like a man of honour, and always stick to a bargain though made with the devil himself; or he would be sure to suffer grievous things before the time came that the compact should expire. But if, in the interval, a little coin was dropt to the brothers of the abbey, one of them would take his stand, and drive off Satan when he came to possess himself bodily of his prey. The devil generally agreed to meet his fiddler in a nar-

row lane; but when he now found he could not nab him, he exclaimed, alluding to the monk stationed in ambush near the spot—"'Tis the blackbird behind the hedge that keeps thee safe, thou scraper of old tunes, and foul railer against thy master. Know, fiddler mine, and I tell it thee only because I cannot help it, being compelled to do so by the exorcisms of the brethren now going on at the abbey—that hadst thou never called for me, I had never appeared. But look to thyself, friend, and blame not me. Has it not ever been with thee, when thou wast angry, in mirth, in sadness, in bargaining or in liquor; 'I wish the devil did this;' or, 'I wish the devil had me;' or, 'I wish the devil were here.' Devil here and devil there; and yet now is he unwelcome company. Go home, tune thy fiddle, play my lord abbot a psalm; leave off profane swearing, and obey the monks, not failing to give them their dues, and fear no more dog nor devil for the nonce."

Is not this story like one of the Old Moralities? May it not be a vestige of one of them, well known here in those days when the inhabitants of the monastery and the choir of the church acted holy plays?

Indeed, till within the last thirty years, the boys of this town, so I am informed, used every Christmas to act a standing old play, handed down by tradition, called the *Dying Miller*. Father Christmas was one of the characters, the New Year another, and St. George performed sundry feats of valour. Mary Colling has very kindly exerted herself to try if she could recover for me any of the traditionary doggrel assigned to the parts in this piece; some few lines of which she could remember having heard

when a child. But hitherto we have not succeeded; though many of the elders remember the characters, and the style in which they drest them.

The most modern story I have heard of Satan is, that a youth of this neighbourhood went into the woods to pick nuts on a Sunday; and the devil, pleased to see him so employed instead of going to church, kindly gave him assistance, and pulled down the bushes for him. The lad thought himself highly favoured, till he perceived the cloven foot; when he instantly quitted the wood, but soon after died. "This story," says Mary, "is still told by mothers to their little boys to prevent their breaking the sabbath."

I now come to the vestiges of our ancient customs; these having been gleaned by Mary and myself, but principally by her, amongst the good old folks of the town and neighbourhood. They are for the greater part fast wearing out, and two or three generations hence it is probable few traces may be left of their existence.

Brand quotes a passage from Moresin, that tends to show that in ancient times, at the festival of St. Valentine, men made presents to the women, as the women did to the men at other seasons. We have a vestige of this custom not altogether extinct; for on St. Valentine's day a young woman sometimes thus addresses the first young man she meets:—

> "Good morrow, Valentine, I go to-day,
> To wear for you what you must pay,
> A pair of gloves next Easter day."

And new gloves are generally sent on Easter eve by the young man whom any fair damsel may have selected to make her such a present by thus inviting

him to do it. It is not, however, I am told, very common to send the gloves, unless there is a little sweethearting in the case.

Washing clothes on a Good Friday is with us considered a great sin; and productive of the worst luck. Whoever does so is sure to wash away one of their family, who will die before the year is out. To wean children on this day is deemed very lucky. Many people then begin to till their gardens, as they believe, to use their own words, that all things put in the earth on a good Friday will grow *goody*, and return to them with great increase.

Shrove Tuesday is a noted day in our town, though not so much kept as it used to be many years ago. The farmers considered it a great holiday, and every person who was in their employ feasted on pancakes. The great sport of the day was to assemble round the fire and each person to toss a cake before he had it for his supper. The awkwardness of the tossers, who were compelled to eat their share, even if it fell into the fire itself, afforded great diversion. Lent-crocking is a similar sport, and is still here and there practised in some of the old houses in the country. Parties of young persons would during Lent go to the most noted farm-houses, and sing, in order to obtain a crock (cake), an old song beginning

"I see by the latch
There is something to catch;
I see by the string
The good dame's within;
Give a cake, for I've none;
At the door goes a stone,
Come give, and I'm gone."

If invited in, a cake, a cup of cider, and a health

followed. If not invited in, the sport consisted in battering the house door with stones, because not open to hospitality. Then the assailant would run away, be followed and caught, and brought back again as prisoner, and had to undergo the punishment of roasting the shoe. This consisted in an old shoe being hung up before the fire, which the culprit was obliged to keep in a constant whirl, roasting himself as well as the shoe, till some damsel took compassion on him and let him go; in this case he was to treat her with a little present at the next fair.

It is here said, that if a young woman, on Midsummer-day, plucks a full-blown rose, blindfolded, while the chimes are playing twelve, and folds it up in a sheet of white paper, and does not open it till Christmas day, it will then be found as fresh as when gathered; and if she places it in her bosom, the young man to whom she is to be married will come and snatch it away.

The poor people here have many superstitious ideas about the days of the week. To begin to do anything on a Friday, or to make a journey, or a bargain on that day, is held such bad luck, that I have known persons, even of the better order, put off an affair because they would not enter on it with an ill omen.

The fortunes of children are likewise considered to be very much regulated by the day on which they were born. Here is a poetical adage on the subject common in our town:—

"Monday's child is fair in face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,

Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for its living;
And a child that 's born on a Christmas day,
Is fair and wise, good and gay."

The 29th of May is still a holiday much observed in our town, though, I am told, far less so than it used to be some years back. A notion prevailed that, on that day, any person might cut oak boughs wherever he pleased, provided it was done before six o'clock, and the youths and maidens would rise with the light to prepare for the sports. These oak boughs were hung around the doors and windows; and chaplets, &c. duly placed in bonnets and hats. In the afternoon, a mock battle followed, (originally intended, as far as I can collect, to represent the republican and monarchical parties,) the combatants of which, on the royal side, were armed with kettles and buckets of water. The republicans proceeded to tear down the oak boughs from the doors and windows: and these assailants were well drenched whilst a scuffle ensued—all carried on with the utmost good humour—and if the young men succeeded in getting the boughs, they used to tie them together and drag them through the town in token of victory; but were generally waylaid and dispossessed of their trophies by the opposite party. The inhabitants would give them pence to make merry with after their frolic.

However, during one of these frolics, about thirty years ago, rather an unpleasant affair took place from the following circumstance. This vicinity was a great depôt for French prisoners; and some of the officers lodged in the town. Opposite a house where one of them resided, was erected a grand display of oak boughs and May bushes on the top of a long

pole. Some mischievous individual persuaded the foreigner that it was a part of the sports for some person, as a good joke, to remove it, and persuaded Monsieur to perform the feat. He, thinking no harm, did so, when a stout old fellow, a true John Bull, who lived near, seeing this act committed by the Frenchman, considered it a premeditated insult to the royal family of England, as the oak boughs were suspended in honour of the restoration to the crown. Fired with rage, he sallied forth armed with a poker, and commenced so vigorous an assault on the poor foreigner, that had not the more peaceably disposed interfered and made up matters, he would very likely have left the luckless offender scarcely a whole bone in his skin. Amongst the little boys, this day goes by the name of *garland day**. Before it arrives, the children go about in parties, six or seven together, *halfing*, as they call it. This custom is nothing more than to collect as many birds' eggs as they can against garland day; and all the neighbours, high or low, who happen to be possessed of a garden, are duly teazed and laid under contribution to give away their flowers to make trophies. The garlands are carried about thus formed—two crossed hoops are entwined with flowers, and strung with birds' eggs in the middle; every egg being held allowable, save that of the redbreast; if such is discovered in a garland it is quickly assailed with stones and destroyed. Very few children in this

* I have now and then heard garlands called by the old name *Coronels*, in Devonshire. We have here still in common use many obsolete words; such as *barm* for yeast; *Clome*, earthenware; *Heltier*, slater; *Helling*, roof; *Slock*, to entice; *Distraught*, and *muzed* mad; *Worsen*, to render worse, &c., and indeed sufficient to supply a long list of old words.

town would hurt a redbreast, as it is considered unlucky to do so; this bird being entitled to kindness from the human race above every other bird that flies. Mary Colling thinks it is held thus sacred from the sympathy excited for it by that most beautiful of all ballads, 'The Children in the Wood;' where the redbreast covers the poor little things with leaves. But I am rather disposed to think that in the ballad the robin is assigned, by the poet, to perform that charitable office in consequence of his tenderness and sympathy for man; as, of all birds, robin is most confiding and fearless in his approaches towards us; he comes familiarly to our doors; he will not hesitate to enter our dwellings, and may be tamed to pick crumbs from our hands. The peasantry here have a most uncouth name for this pretty bird; they call it *pausty-legs*. I could not guess even what this name meant, till Mr. Johnes told me it was intended for posty-legs, or legs like a post.

To return from this digression: the little boys are fantastically dressed early in the morning with ribands tied round their arms and waists, and a smart garland cap on their heads, made of pasteboard, decorated with gold paper, and little prints with a gilt border, finished with oak leaves intermixed. Thus equipped, they parade about the town, each little party by itself; the leader, who is generally the eldest boy, carries the garland. Others have little drums, and whistles, and swords of lath; a triangle is their music: they collect the donations of the public; and in the afternoon it is equally divided among them. The garland eggs are placed on some block or post; and their great amusement is to throw

stones, and try who can break the most. This is our Tavistock way of celebrating King Charles's Restoration, amongst the younger tribe. The elders go to church, and Mr. Bray annually gives them an appropriate sermon.

We have here many vestiges of ancient superstitions. That respecting Midsummer eve I have before noticed. And the very old custom of going into the church at night whilst the chimes are playing twelve o'clock, in order to creep three times under the communion table to be cured of fits, is still held in repute. The present sexton, Mr. James Cole, has been applied to in such cases to unlock the church door. Mr. Bray considers this custom a vestige of the very ancient one of creeping under the Tolmen to be cured of various disorders.* We have another practice, which I am assured is frequently observed as a cure for the tooth-ache: a very general complaint in this neighbourhood, where it is common to see *young* women with not a sound front tooth in their heads; and many a handsome face is thus spoilt and looks old before its time. I attribute this to the use of a very acid cider as a daily beverage; nor do I think I am mistaken; as the decay of the teeth, so early in life, is most common with the servant girls and lower orders, who never drink any thing else with their meals; whilst some of the very

* Since writing the above, Mr. Bray received, as clergyman of the place, the following letter: I omit only the name of the writer—"Rev. Sir, I should take it as a great favour if your Honour would be good enough to let me have the key of the churchyard to-night, to go in at twelve o'clock, to cut off three bits of lead about the size of a half farthing; each from three different shuts (meaning spouts), for the cure of fits. Sir, I remain your humbled obedient servant,

"Tavistock, February 2d, 1835. (Signed) J. M."

poor cottagers in the surrounding country, who seldom taste anything stronger than water, or milk and water, often have teeth white and sound as pearls. Here is the cure for the tooth-ache: if the sufferer have a tooth left sufficiently whole to enable him to use it. "Take an old skull found in the churchyard, bite a tooth out of it, and keep it in your pocket all the year round, and never more will you have pain in your teeth or gums."

I have copied this delectable receipt as given to me; and only this very day, had I not been too lazy to stir from my room, I might have had the gratification of seeing a scramble after old teeth in a skull. For Miss Elizabeth Greco (of whom I spoke just now in the note) had a new piece of music which she thought I should like, and very kindly came to play and sing it to me; she asked me if I knew what was going on in the churchyard, so many persons, old and young, were thronging to it. Scarcely had she spoken, when Mary Colling came running in, and said if I wanted to see an old custom she had told me of, I had only to go to the churchyard, for several skulls having, in making a grave, been dug up near the remains of Orgar's tomb, there was going on such a scene as she had never before witnessed: men and women tugging with their mouths at every tooth they could find left to cure them. I felt quite satisfied, however, with her report, and Miss Elizabeth and the piano being a much greater attraction did not stir from the fire-side.

Our terror of meeting a single magpie crossing our path is very great. Sad must be the fortune of any person who has this mishap—sad I am sure then must be mine; for the last I called magpie

year; never once did we ride, walk, or drive along the Plymouth road, a favourite ride of ours, without meeting a solitary magpie strutting or flying most ominously across the road. Now and then we saw a couple, which is *good* luck; once three, a sign of a wedding; and once four, a sign of death.

We have a thistle that is considered holy. I do not know its particular species; but the plant itself is noble and beautiful. One of them, above five feet in height, sprang up wildly in our garden in the midst of a strawberry bed. It had a large purple flower, and the stems and leaves spread to a very great extent. So much did Mr. Bray admire it, that he would not suffer it to be disturbed. This plant is valuable in a medicinal view; the old women here say it is a cure for all disorders; and when I was so ill last summer, more than one wanted to persuade me to make a decoction and try it. On the leaves of this thistle there are white specks, which I learn from the venerable authority just quoted, is occasioned by the Virgin Mary having sprinkled her milk on this very plant during her flight into Egypt. This conferred a blessing on the thistle and made it salutary for ever.

I here say nothing about the "thousand and one" charms we have in this county for curing the king's evil; some of them being as delicately pleasing as the cure for the tooth-ache; let them go; the least offensive, however, is that of Queen Anne's farthing, a stale and common charm in many counties.

Reading the eighth psalm over the heads of infants three times three days in the week, for three following weeks, will, they say, prevent babes having the thrush. Another very old custom prevails

amongst the poor, that of unlocking their boxes in the house where a friend is dying: they consider it makes the sick person die easy.

As we have unlucky omens, so have we likewise lucky ones. The sun shining on the bride going to church is particularly fortunate. It is fortunate, also, to see the new moon on the right hand; and when you do so, it is a prudent thing to shake your pockets: for what purpose I cannot tell; but as it is likewise deemed wisdom to pull out your money and let the new moon shine upon it, I suppose it is connected with good fortune in a pecuniary point of view.

Another of our customs is not, I believe, confined to this place; it is that of the *Bible and the key*. Many old people when they have lost anything, and suspect it to be stolen, take the fore-door key of their dwelling, and, in order to find out the thief, tie this key to the Bible, placing it very carefully on the eighteenth verse of the fiftieth psalm. Two persons must then hold up the book by the bow of the key, and first repeat the name of the suspected thief, and then the verse from the psalm. If the Bible moves, the suspected person is considered guilty; if it does not move, innocent. Mary Colling tells me she has very gravely seen this done, as an infallible test of finding out the truth.

When the poor get a loaf from the flour of *new* corn, the first who gets it gives a mouthful, as they say, to his or her neighbour, and they fill their mouths as full as they can in order not to want bread before the harvest comes round again.

Mary informs me that one day when herself and her little dog Dimpler took a walk into the country

very lovingly together, she happened to pass by a cottage and garden. Pleased with the neatness and prettiness of the spot, she stayed awhile to look on the flowers. A poor woman, seeing she did so, came out, asked her to walk in, and gave her a very pretty nosegay. Mary observed in the cottage window several beautiful plants, each having a small piece of black crape or riband tied around it. She inquired what might be the reason of their being so decorated. When the poor woman told her, with a sigh, that she had very lately buried her husband, and if she had not put the plants into mourning they would have died too. Mary was much affected by the distress she evidently saw putting these questions had given the poor widow, and said she was sorry she had asked about the plants. But the widow told her not to grieve for that; the question was natural enough for one who came from a town, but the custom was a usual thing in the country.

There is much talk in this place about a mysterious and subterranean passage (I should like to find it out), that leads all the way from the Abbey to the gateway of Fitz-ford. A great deal of wealth in coin and plate, including, as I was told, "a crucifix as large as life," being there deposited. Mary heard an old woman say that she was told by her great-grandmother, that during the civil wars a waggon load of plate was carried in there, and never afterwards brought out. An inhabitant of this town, I am likewise informed, once discovered, whilst rooting up an apple-tree at Fitz-ford, some steps; and digging still deeper, found an entrance which led under ground. Several persons went

down, but none presumed to follow up the discovery as it ought to have been followed. I hear, also (but pray observe I do not vouch for the truth of any of these tales), that a man named Bickley, whilst employed in raising sand in a place called Jessop's Hay, dug up, as he imagined, a bag of fine sand, which proved to be a bag of gold dust. He also discovered a pavement supposed to be that of the passage. Every body, I observe, has a tale to tell about this old passage; but question them closely, and you are sure to find they heard it from somebody, who heard it from somebody else, and so on—a sort of evidence to be cautiously admitted in a statement of facts.

That there was a passage, however, belonging to, or connected with, the Abbey, is not at all improbable; and if I were inclined to credit any of the above stories, it would be the old woman's about the plate. Because, as I shall relate when we come to the times of Charles the First, Fitz-ford house was bravely held out by the royalists, and taken by storm by the Parliament party. The prisoners were not likely to point out to sequestrators and republicans where they had hidden the wealth, probably of all the royalists in the town, who had taken shelter in Fitz-ford, and assisted in the defence of that mansion; and time, death, and many other chances might, in such perils, have intervened to prevent its recovery. More of this hereafter.

I was about to conclude this long "and very pithy" letter (as a good friend of mine calls the subjects on which I have been writing), when Mary Colling, who always acts as her own postman, brought me one written by herself, in reply to some questions

I had proposed to her, about certain places, &c., in our town. I shall here, therefore, transcribe a portion of her letter, as it will give you a fair specimen of her prose style. Many are the authors and authoresses of this day who, from not being, like Mary, content to follow nature, and to write as they would talk, produce a less pleasing mode of expression than the following.

"TO MRS. BRAY.

"My dear Madam,

"On the south side of the Tavy is a hamlet consisting of several cottages, called in the parish register Dolvins, but better known to the inhabitants by the name of Guernsey, that nick-name having been given to it in consequence of a very noted smuggler who resided there some years ago. At a little distance eastward is another hamlet, called Greenland, from its cold situation; the sun seldom shines upon it, as it is overhung with a very high rock whence issue several springs of water; and during the winter the icicles (or, as the little boys call them, the cockables) which hang from it, are looked upon as a great curiosity, from their size and transparency. The Exeter road, opposite this hamlet, affords a picturesque view of the bright stream of water from the rock which dashes into your favourite Tavy. Near is a rookery and an orchard, that in summer adds to the beauty of the scene. The wild flowers, which there grow in abundance, have also a pretty appearance; and though the place is considered so cold, there is a very good garden that abounds with various sorts of flowers.

The female who resides in a neat cottage attached to it, takes great pride in her garden, every corner of it having a something to boast of.

"In reply to the question about the haunted house, I have learned the following particulars. About half a mile from Tavistock there is a farm called Down House, the dwelling itself was rebuilt about eleven or twelve years ago. It was considered before an ancient place, and haunted by ghosts. Here is a story of one. The family who resided there well knew the hour of the night in which the ghosts made their appearance, and always took care to go to bed before it came. But it happened on a time that a child was very ill, and asked its mother for water; she went to the pitcher to get some, when the child refused any but such as might be got directly from the pump. The mother became quite distressed, unwilling to displease the child, yet afraid to go down to the pump, as it was about the hour in which the ghost walked. She considered upon it a little while, and the child still continuing very anxious about the water, she at last said, 'In the name of God I will go down.' She did so. Passing over the stairs she perceived a shadow, and then she heard footsteps; and when she came to the pump she felt a hand on her shoulder. She turned and perceived a tall man. Summoning a good resolution, however, she said, 'In the name of God, why troublest thou me?' The ghost replied, 'It is well for thee that thou hast spoken to me in the name of God; this being the last time allotted me to trouble this world, or else I should have injured thee. Now do as I tell thee,

and be not afraid. Come with me and I will direct thee to a something which shall remove this pump; under it is concealed treasure.'

"This something was procured, and applied as the ghost directed. The pump was quickly removed, when under it there lay a great deal of money. She was desired to take up the treasure and stock her farm with it. And the spirit told her that if ever any person molested or deprived her of her property, he should suffer well for it. He then ordered her to go and give the water to the child, who, in reward for her courage and trust in God, should recover. The cock crew; directly the figure dwindled again to a shadow, ascended through the air, and she watched till he soon became a small bright cloud."——

"There is," says Mary Colling, in another letter, "scarcely an old man or woman in Tavistock but can tell some story or other about your Lady Howard. Some have seen her in the shape of a calf; others as a wool-sack full of eyes, rolling along from Fitz-ford. But most have seen her as a greyhound, and very often in the coach of bones, as described by you in Fitz of Fitz-ford. This story is frequently told of her: Two servant girls, whose sweethearts came one Sunday evening to see them, being informed they intended to get up early the following morning to washing, offered to come to the house, at the hour named, for company. The servants were very glad of this, as the house was so haunted, according to report. The young men, anxious to fulfil their promise, determined to get up early. One heard Tavistock chimes play at twelve o'clock and concluded it was four. He arose, awoke his com-

panion, and they went together to Fitz-ford. When they came there, the doors being open and the fires all lighted, they thought that the servants were gone up stairs to prepare the clothes, &c. They agreed upon playing a trick, and got under the stairs in order to frighten the maids. Soon after they heard footsteps, and, peeping out cautiously, they saw two very large black dogs, with eyes as big as saucers, and fiery tongues, which hung out of their mouths. The young men thought at all events they had best remain quiet, which they did till cock-crowing; when directly the dogs vanished, the fires went out, and the doors instantly closed. Soon after the servants came down stairs, and on hearing this story became so alarmed that they determined to quit Fitz-ford. But on recollecting they were each the first-born of their parents, they felt they were safe; as it is said that no witch, ghost, or pixy can injure the first-born child. They became, therefore, reconciled to the place."

Thus ends Mary Colling's account, and my letter too, having sent quite enough hobgoblins for one packet; and lest the post-office should be troubled, and complain to Sir Francis Freeling if I send more, I will conclude with wishing you may be, my dear Sir, ghost-free all your days, saving from a few visits of Sir Thomas More, the renewal of whose 'Colloquies' in the library of Keswick, would be a very desirable event for the public, and in which no individual of that body would feel a greater interest than your

Very gratefully obliged,

And most faithful servant,

ANNA E. BRAY.

LETTER XXXI.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Old house in the neighbourhood—Superstitions about it—Allusions to Baretti—Reflections on the decay of greatness—Old buildings—Kilworthy; built by the Glanville family temp. Elizabeth—The old mansion and its present state described—The hall, the gardens and terraces—Avenue of old beech-trees—One spot peculiarly beautiful; now called the Pixies' Pool—Devonshire Rysdael, Mr. John Hitchins—Kilworthy hill, the ascent rugged and steep—Fine view from the heights—Custom of cutting down the trees in hedges injurious to the landscape—Suffered to grow in them near Exeter—Walla Brook—Ina's Coombe—Browne and Carrington; their poetry quoted—Judge Glanville; a sketch of his life given—His tomb in Tavistock church—Effigies of himself and lady—Remarks on each—A philosopher's opinion of women not always to be credited—All the real history of Judge Glanville concluded; the traditionary stated—Whence derived—Fictions by the writer in the novel of Fitz of Fitz-ford, now told in Tavistock as traditions—This error corrected—The real traditions on which the work was founded given—Copy of a letter by Mr. Bray to the late Mr. Daniel Lysons, giving the striking traditionary tale of Judge Glanville and his daughter—The first idea, and plan of grounding on this a tale of romance—Character of Betsy Grimbal; on what founded—Lady Howard, a character—The gateway at Fitz-ford, the spectre hound—The coach of bones—Tales of superstition, by whom credited—The writer goes to Fitz-ford to reconnoitre—The plot of the tale formed on the spot—The hound named —Mr. Lewis, jun., his sketch of the blood-hound—Character of Levi the jew, suggested by an acquaintance with an honest Israelite —Attempt to depict him in the novel—The story of John Fitz, of Fitz-ford, the lawyer and astrologer, and Sir Nicholas Slanning, given exactly as found in Prince's "Worthies of Devon." Their epitaph—How far the novel follows the story, and where it deviates —Sir John Page, said to have married a daughter of Glanville; Sir John a merchant of Plymouth—His house in that town—When pulled down—Page's coffin found and opened—Curiosity of the populace to see it—No authority but that of tradition in support of

the truth of the very striking incident related of Judge Glanville and his daughter—The tradition probably arose from some confusion about the story of Judge Hody and his son, as related by Prince—Lamentable tragedy of Page of Plymouth; a drama, temp. Elizabeth—Another interesting tale respecting a son of Judge Glanville, mentioned by Prince—Sketch of the life of Sir John Glanville, serjeant at law—His birth and education—Removes to Lincoln's Inn—Returned as burgess for Plymouth—Becomes serjeant at law, and Speaker of the House of Commons—His worthy conduct in the House—Is knighted by the king—His enemies cause his sufferings—Glanville distinguished in the committee respecting subsidies—Hampden, seeing the temper of the House adverse to the king, calls for the "Question"—Serjeant Glanville's meritorious conduct and speech on the occasion—He produces a powerful effect on the House—His allusions to the ship-money cause offend the court—Dissolution of Parliament—Feeling of different parties upon it—Imprudence of the king in that dissolution—Civil war declared—Glanville follows the fortunes of the persecuted king at Oxford—He is created doctor of civil law in the Convocation, 1643—Glanville pronounced a desperate malignant; he is seized and committed to prison—Not released till 1648—His estates fined—Glanville six times a prisoner in the course of his life—University of Oxford return him as their burgess—Cromwell will not allow him to sit in the House—He pleads as a lawyer, and at his own peril, the cause of the loyalists—Glanville, the first friend of Sir Matthew Hale—Amiable character of Glanville—The beautiful story of Glanville's conduct to his brother Francis related—Francis knighted by Charles II.—He marries a daughter of —— Crymes, Esq. of Devon—Death of the great Sir John Glanville—Buried at Broad Hinton—The estate of Kilworthy eventually passed to the family of Manaton, in default of male issue—Manuscript sent to the writer whilst engaged on his life—A charity there recorded bestowed by him to send a poor boy from Tavistock to the University—Glanville the friend of learning—His works political—Some of his speeches preserved in Rushworth—His lines to Browne the poet—The sons of the serjeant distinguished—John, a counsellor at law—Francis, another son, a youth of the greatest promise; joins the royal cause, and after the most gallant conduct falls at Bridgwater, 1645—Joseph Glanville, chaplain in ordinary to Charles I.—Some account of him—The last descendant of the elder branch of this illustrious family died a few years ago in the poor-house of Bradstone—Sir John Maynard born in Tavistock—His family—His early life; conduct in the time of Charles I.—His integrity; a true friend to the Protestant Church—Member for

Beer Alston—Little known of his private life—His charities and worth—His reply to King William when above ninety years old—His death—No traditions of him in Tavistock.

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Vicarage, Tavistock, January 28th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

THERE is an old house and domain in this neighbourhood, which has often set me moralizing, as did Baretti, when shut up in his post-chaise, on the rainy afternoon he drove from Tavistock to Horse Bridge. There are so many recollections of former times, of old tales and traditions connected with the domain in question, that it is the finest place possible for the indulgence of imagination; and though, as you will presently find, you are not altogether a stranger to it, yet I purpose in this letter to make you still more intimately acquainted with the localities of *Kilworthy;* nor shall I let you off till Judge Glanville, the founder of the mansion, and his sons and his grandsons have passed in succession before you; even as did the ghosts before Macbeth in the cave of the witches; nor must you suppose this to be by any means an inappropriate simile; for if you did not really see these shadows of the mighty, of former generations, in our parish of Tavistock, you *might* see them (if report speaks truth), which is much the same thing, by only visiting Kilworthy at the dead hour of night, "the bell then beating one," when "churchyards yawn, and graves give up their dead." It is undoubtedly true that though I have heard a great deal about the "walking of the old Judge," I never yet had the pleasure to meet him. Possibly, however, this may arise from no want of civility on his part towards me

who have already made him figure in print, but may rather be the consequence of the peculiar circumstances attending my birth; for having had the good fortune to be born on Christmas-day, my old nurse used to tell me when a child, "I could never see a ghostie as long as I lived," all persons so born being ghost-free to the end of their days.

Thus, therefore, you find I am reduced to the necessity of giving you all my stories of this nature on the credit of others, and not on that of my own eyes; a thing I deem a great misfortune, because sometimes when people are good enough to tell me a few "real facts," that somewhat startle my belief, I am so mistrustful and incredulous to wish for ocular demonstration. Of these real facts I shall have a few to tell by and bye, when we come to a chapter on the wonderful; but at present we are about to visit Kilworthy; and though it is the most delightful place for a ramble, especially in Gammarby wood, yet I must here keep straight on, or there will be no end to this letter; a beginning, middle, and ending being as necessary, I presume, in observing the unities in a letter as in any other description of composition. Here then follows my beginning, and as we are but yet, like Baretti, on the way, it shall be somewhat in his moralizing strain; and that will do for a preface.

There is a melancholy feeling which constantly assails us when we witness the decay of greatness, either in animate or inanimate things; ever accompanied by that humiliating reflection so often made the moral of tomb-stones and monuments—*Sic transit gloria mundi.* How fully do we experience this feeling when we look upon the walls of some old

but once stately mansion falling to decay, or patched and supported by meaner buildings, wholly incongruous in date and appearance with the original edifice! And though nature and art agree very well together, where they have been purposely combined, yet this is not the case where the former breaks in upon the latter with a desolating hand. Thus, when in an old-fashioned garden we see the hedges of box and of yew that once were trimmed and clipped into order and formality, now growing ragged and wild; the long avenues left between them choked up with brambles and weeds; whilst many a stately terrace of hewn stone presents the mere wreck of fallen greatness; its steps green, tottering, broken, and half covered with creeping plants;—the aspect of the whole is so cheerless, that it calls up in the mind nothing but a sense of the vanity and littleness of the works of man in these adornments of his domestic habitation.

Such are the feelings I have more than once experienced when visiting the now humbled remains of Kilworthy, once the splendid mansion of the Glanvilles, a family long distinguished in Devon: the house was built by them in the reign of Elizabeth. This structure partook of that combination of heavy and clumsy ornament common to the period, yet rendered imposing by the grandeur that characterized the original proportions of the building to which it was appended. The front of Kilworthy (I speak of what it *was*, not what it *is*), facing the south, displayed many a window, divided in the midst by mullions, so large and broad that they not a little obscured the light the windows were intended to admit.

A small tower, not unlike the top of a pepper-box, stood at either end of the building, that was itself surmounted by a high and slanting roof. Along the front the parapet was embattled, and a noble cluster of chimneys rose to a considerable height, and displayed their ornamented caps far above every other part of the building. A projecting porch stood before the principal entrance; over the outward door of which appeared, carved in stone, the arms of Glanville: three crosses, in the form of that called St. Andrew's, in the language of heraldry, three saltiers or, on a field azure. The date of the building was beneath, likewise carved in stone.

Such *was* Kilworthy; but it no longer appears in its original form. It underwent considerable alterations in the reign of Charles II., and, lastly and still worse, in that of George III., when, nearly sixty years since, the front was entirely modernized. In a long passage of the house, as well as in one of its chambers, may still be seen a vast number of paintings on panel, representing, in succession, the arms, alliances, &c., of the family of Glanville, for many generations. The hall, though now but a vestige of what it once was, shows enough to indicate its former grandeur: it was originally lofty—it is now low, and divided by a partition. The hall was panelled on either side with oak, and had a fireplace large enough to contain several persons within its ample sides. I can fancy what it was in the Judge's time, when the dogs or andirons, that supported the blazing logs, were, no doubt, finished at their tops with solid and chased silver. The recesses still seen in the hall must have been a more modern construction, since neither these, nor the

gilded Corinthian capitals of the pilasters, are older than the time of Charles II.

The gardens of Kilworthy, where slight traces of their ancient grandeur may even yet be seen, were on a scale suited to the place. They ran along the side of an elevated piece of ground to the west of the house; being entered through a pair of ample gates, on whose supporters appeared, at the top of either, a formidable lion rampant, holding in his claws the saltier or, or cross of the Glanvilles, and frowning augustly upon all intruders. These, I will venture to say, in the Judge's days, did not half so well guard the golden fruits of the Hesperides within, as did one of those large and fierce hounds, then so constantly found to perform the part of watch at the doors of the wealthy. The lions, and the original gates of wrought iron, are now gone; but opening those wooden ones that have succeeded to their place, a second and third sort of terrace leads on to the rising garden (the steepness of the ascent being thus broken), and many a gay parterre, no doubt, once lay around exhibiting an endless diversity of flowers and plants. When I saw the gardens of Kilworthy, in their more humble state, there were some beautiful roses in them, and a fine show of fruit. Kilworthy had once a chapel, but that has long disappeared, or has been converted into one of the barns. The dove-cot, stables, and other offices stood near enough to the house for domestic convenience, yet not so near as to become an annoyance to the family residing in it.

A noble avenue of old beech trees, their trunks overgrown with moss, and affording the deepest shade, led on the way from the then principal road

to the mansion, affording the passenger here and there those peeps of landscape, and of the Dartmoor heights, between their trunks and branches, always so welcome to the lover of the picturesque. These beech-trees still remain, venerable from time, and happily untouched by the axe. There are also some very aged ones of exceeding beauty, in what was once the park, where the red deer used to graze on the perpetual herbage this climate secures to our fields. There is one place in Kilworthy which deserves peculiar notice; it is where formerly a pond was supplied by a pretty little streamlet that runs meandering through the grounds. Above this, at the spot I allude to, an old broken bridge of a single arch, and miniature dimensions, still crosses it. The spot is so hung with aged trees, their roots starting from the banks, and overshadowing with their green arms the rippling waters, that it is the very scene in which one would fancy the pixies and fays make their haunts. Here the space is not large; the eye cannot wander beyond its green enclosure of deep boughs. All is still and apparently remote from human habitation: so sheltered is it from the winds that they seldom wander here in rude gusts. The birds are very fond of this place to build their nests in it, and seldom have I visited it without being struck by the peculiar effect produced by that wild music, so sweet to the ear of fancy, that they made among the boughs, whilst the vocalists themselves were often unseen. The notes of the blackbird and the thrush mingled delightfully with the very gentlest murmur of the very softest stream. And this I used to fancy was exactly such a spot as that where Ariel led Ferdinand by the guidance

of an unseen minstrel. I could almost imagine I saw him looking round with wonder, as he exclaimed,

> "Where should this music be? i' the air,
> Or the earth? It sounds no more,
> Yet it crept by me upon the waters."

This place has, since I endeavoured to describe a scene suggested by it, received the name of the Pixies' Pool. And our Devonshire Rysdael, Mr. John Hitchins, whose genius is not less remarkable than the slight value he attaches to it, has made some most beautiful drawings of this spot. Few scenes, indeed, will afford to the mind of the painter and the poet a more calm and contemplative pleasure, than that experienced whilst listening to the wild songs of the birds, and looking on the still and clear shadows in the Pixies' Pool.

But I must not indulge this descriptive mood, well knowing that I may tire you, and that when once I get on a favourite spot I find it difficult to leave it. Should any tourist, who may chance to visit the beautiful vicinity of Tavistock, ascend the hill to the north of our town, and visit Kilworthy, the walk will be good for his health, and will certainly soon give him the assurance, if he can bear the ascent, that he is (as the jockeys say of a horse) sound in wind; since a more steep, rough, or rugged path will scarcely be found near any town in the county of Devon. Yet the acclivity once mastered, he will be amply repaid for the trouble by the pleasing variety of objects that form the surrounding view.

Tavistock, with the clustering pinnacles of what remains of its venerable abbey, the Tavy winding

beautifully amidst a long extent of valley, closed in by hills partially clothed with wood (in Judge Glanville's time they were more so), presents, at every turn, a scene of peculiar interest, and one that might be rendered more so if those who have the management of the lands in this part of Devon (and should they ever see this letter, I hope they will not despise the hint) would but follow the example of the neighbourhood of Exeter, and suffer the trees to grow up in the hedges as they do near that ancient city, and not indulge the fondness for lopping, which now permits the axe to be laid to the trunk of every sapling that dares lift its head above the prescribed height of each hedge-enclosed field. I hope to see this improvement, so that the landscape, a thing not so subject to the mutations of time as are buildings of stone or wood, may again become as waving with forest trees as it was when viewed by the Glanvilles from their sylvan grounds of Kilworthy. Once more to return to their dwelling.

To the east, though at some distance from the steep hill on which the house stood, the ground runs in a precipitous descent towards the valley, through which flows the little stream of the Walla Brook, visiting in its course *Ina's Coombe*. This coombe and the waters must be considered with interest, and the Walla, indeed, ranked amongst the classical fountains of England, since each has been celebrated by Browne in his 'Britannia's Pastorals.' Browne, born in Tavistock, and possessing that love of nature inherent in the breast of every child of song, delighted to describe the beautiful scenery of his native place, and with him the wanderer through Kilworthy may truly exclaim,

"Show me who can so many christall rylls,
Such sweet-clothed valleys, or aspiring hills."

And to this encomium may be fairly added that of another poet of our neighbourhood, too early lost to us: Carrington thus writes,

"Lovely Devonia! land of flowers and songs!
To thee the duteous lay. Thou hast a cloud
For ever in thy sky—a breeze, a shower
For ever on thy meads; yet where shall man,
Pursuing spring around the globe, refresh
His eye with scenes more beauteous than adorn
Thy fields of matchless verdure?"

Having now endeavoured to give you some idea of Kilworthy, I shall proceed to mention all I have been able to learn, both from written record and tradition, concerning the family who built and resided in that mansion.

"Sir John Glanville," says Prince, "one of the justices of the Common Pleas, was a native of this county, and born in the famous town of Tavistock." He goes on to state, though he is not certain of the fact, that this gentleman was descended from Ranulph de Glanvil, a great man in the days of William the Conqueror; and his grandson, he tells us, was a still greater in the times of Henry II.; for he was a baron of Parliament, and so skilled in the laws of the realm that he was made one of the justices itinerant in the twenty-fifth year of that king's reign; and soon after raised to the dignity of "Justice of all England." Thus early was a Glanville celebrated for his profound knowledge of the laws, and his posterity appear to have inherited his aptitude for the legal profession.

John, the subject of this sketch, being but a younger branch of their stately tree, had not the

advantage of a university education, and commenced his career in no more eminent station than that of an attorney at law. However he might be wanting in the early benefits conferred by regular study in the schools of learning, he had so much perseverance that, after he entered himself of the society of Lincoln's Inn, he rose into great promise and reputation, having applied his mind with indefatigable industry to the study of the profession. In the thirty-first year of Elizabeth's reign, 1589, he was called to the bar, and a few years after chosen Lent reader in his house; and, being nearly at the same time summoned to the degree of serjeant at law, he read in the following autumn. His reputation (as it is often seen with persons of real merit) constantly increased with every favouring opportunity he found of bringing his talents into play. Glanville was soon deemed worthy higher preferment, so that in 1598 he was made one of the justices of Common Pleas—an office he filled with the greatest honour and integrity. This, however, he did not long enjoy, as he died about two years after, and was buried in Tavistock.

Judge Glanville early in life had married a lady whose name was Skirret; he had by her three sons and four daughters. Of the former I shall have more to say presently in my letter; but I cannot conclude this brief notice of the Judge without giving his character in the words of Prince, who lived so much nearer his time than we do, and from all circumstances was so likely to be well acquainted with it. "He was," continues the venerable biographer, "not only skilled in the deep and more recondite points of the law, but he was also a great

lover of justice and integrity, being careful in his place to hold the balances intrusted to him, as became him, with an even and steady hand; not inclining to either side, out of awe or dread, out of favour or affection: he would not oppress the small to please the great, but administer justice, according to his oath, indifferently to all, with that uprightness and honesty as one conscious to himself he must one day come to judgment, and have all his judgments judged over again. This learned person, dying at Tavistock July 27th, 1600, was interred in the parish church thereunto belonging, where is erected to his memory a very fair monument, so lively representing his person in his scarlet robes, that some at their first entrance into one of the doors there, against which it stands, have been surprised at the sight, supposing it had been living."

The effigy of Judge Glanville, thus lauded by Prince, is certainly a very superior work of art. There is so much character about the face and head, that I have no doubt it was an excellent likeness. Mr. Bray tells me it so exactly corresponds with an old picture, on panel, representing the judge in his black cap and scarlet robes, that was for years in the possession of his late father, that it confirms the circumstance. The effigy is that of a corpulent man lying at full length on his side; the upper part of the body being raised, and the left arm resting on a cushion. The countenance and brows in particular exhibit those strong marks of intellectual superiority which ever distinguish a man of talent. As a whole his head is striking and impressive, notwithstanding the injury it has sustained by a loss of a part of the nose; the hands have likewise been

mutilated, as well as many parts of the tomb. I have no doubt these injuries had their origin in the civil wars when Tavistock was, at one period, in a very disturbed state. In front of the Judge, but beneath the figure, kneels, in a praying attitude, the effigy of Dame Glanville. This, too, is so characteristic, that it must have been an excellent likeness. She is also noseless; but truly estimating her by what remains of her face, one would be led to fancy her husband had made, as many other wise men have done, rather an unfortunate choice in his partner for life. The forehead is low and mean; and the whole expression of the countenance conveys a strong idea of a proud, cross, disagreeable woman. And if the dress is correct, and there can be no doubt it is so, she must have been as fond of finery as good Queen Bess herself was known to be; and as proud of it as a peacock of his magnificent tail. Seneca described woman as "an animal fond of dress." This is rather severe upon the ladies, and ought to be confined to those of Dame Glanville's order; nor ought we to feel very well pleased with the old Roman, nor with any other philosopher, for indulging a querulous mood against us. Virtuous and feeling men honour women: licentious and proud men abuse them; and, lowering them in the scale of intelligent beings, prepare the way to degrade them in their moral and religious character. No truly honest man ever yet held women in contempt; and those who have entertained the society of such only as are vain, frivolous, or worse, are not judges of the worth and the blessing of a truly good woman. This, however, is rather an odd digression in the midst of describing Judge Glanville's monu-

ment, and the figure of his lady. Her dress, then, is the most extravagant representation of the most formidable array of the days of Elizabeth. Her buckram waist, like armour, padded sleeves, ruff and farthingale, are all monstrous; and her double-linked gold chains are grand enough for the lord mayor. On the whole she looks so very formidable, that thus seen stationed before the Judge, she might be considered as representing Justice herself, but it would be in her severest mood. In front of the base of the tomb are seen several small figures about a foot high; these are the miniature effigies of the great man's children. Having now told you all that is known of the real history of Judge Glanville, I shall proceed to mention a story tradition has connected with him, in which he is indeed made to bear a prominent and most painful part.

Before mentioning this, I deem it right to revert to the use I made of the story in a tale you have honoured me with reading, 'Fitz of Fitz-ford,' a legend of Devon. I am more particularly induced to mention it here, because, *since* that tale appeared, many things in it, purely fictions of my own, are *now* told as traditions of Tavistock! And such have, in more than one instance, been noticed in certain periodicals. I do not wish to mislead, or to give rise to any falsehoods respecting our legends. Once then and for ever, to set the question at rest, I shall here state the *real traditions* of this neighbourhood on which I grounded my romance, and shall also give them in the very words in which I found them. No false stories can then hereafter arise.

It was in the beginning of the year 1827 that I chanced to find, amongst some papers relating to

Tavistock, the copy of a letter addressed by Mr. Bray to the late Mr. Daniel Lysons, the author of the 'Magna Britannia,' of which the 'Devonshire' forms a part. Mr. Lysons had written to Mr. Bray to ask him certain questions, in addition to information before conveyed, respecting this place. The answer, of which I found a copy in my husband's own hand, is dated the 16th of January, 1819. Amongst other matters of minor import, it contains the following story, with a few previous remarks. Here it is.

"From information which I have just obtained from an elderly lady (Miss Adams *), it should seem that the Glanvilles formerly resided at Holwell, in the parish of Whitchurch adjoining; and that the Judge removed thence to a house in Tavistock (Carter's), which, she says, was part of the original palace of Ordulph (extending to Mrs. Rundle's). Certainly an arched gateway is near part of it, much in the style of those belonging to the Abbey; and in another part a handsome wainscoted chamber, which she tells me was called King Edgar's chamber; as also a tower apartment. The Judge afterwards built Kilworthy †, about a mile and a half from Tavistock, and occasionally resided in each.

"The Judge's daughter was attached to George Stanwich, a young man of Tavistock, lieutenant of a man of war, whose letters (the father disapproving of the attachment) were intercepted. An old miser

* Miss Adams died about nine years ago, at a very great age. She was a woman possessed of a strong mind, and the living record of whatever of history or tradition might be in any way connected with Tavistock.

† Prince, however, thinks Kilworthy was built by Sir John Glanville, son of the Judge.

of Plymouth, of the name of Page, wishing to have an heir to disappoint his relations, who, perhaps, were too confident in calculating upon sharing his wealth, availed himself of this apparent neglect of the young sailor, and settling on her a good jointure, obtained her hand. She took with her a maid servant from Tavistock, but her husband was so penurious, that he dismissed all the other servants, and caused his wife and her maid to do all the work themselves. On an interview subsequently taking place between her and Stanwich, she accused him of neglecting to write to her; and then discovered that his letters had been intercepted. The maid advised them to get rid of the old gentleman, and Stanwich at length, with great reluctance, consented to their putting an end to him. Page lived in what is now the mayoralty house (at Plymouth), and a woman who lived opposite hearing at night some sand thrown against a window, thinking it was her own, arose, and looking out, saw a young gentleman near Page's window, and heard him say, "For God's sake stay your hand!" A female replied, "'Tis too late, the deed is done." On the following morning it was given out that Page had died suddenly in the night, and as soon as possible he was buried. On the testimony, however, of his neighbour, the body was taken up again, and it appearing that he had been strangled, his wife, Stanwich, and the maid, were tried and executed. It is current among the common people here, that *Judge Glanville, her own father, pronounced her sentence**."

* In the 92nd No. of the Quarterly Review, January, 1832, in the reviewal of Collier's 'History of the English Drama,' I saw it stated, that, before Shakspeare wrote his plays, it was the custom of

On reading this dismal story in Mr. Bray's letter, it instantly struck me that with some alterations, additions, &c., it might be made a ground-work for the plot of a romance that, would admit descriptive scenes, &c. of this town and neighbourhood. And the more I thought of it, the more I felt desirous to execute the plan I had formed. At the same time it struck me that if I could unite with it a second plot, founded on the true story of Sir John Fitz (recorded by Prince), it would heighten the interest, and increase the opportunities that would occur for scenes of a dramatic character. I next turned to (what I shall soon give) the story of Sir John Fitz, and saw it would do.

That of Page required, I thought, considerable alteration. It would make the tale too horrible, too much of the raw-head and bloody-bones order to have the wife kill her husband in the progress of the piece. I determined, therefore, that the deed should have been done years before the opening of the narrative; that two of the parties concerned should have escaped immediate justice (Stanwich and the maid), and that the miserable consequences of their crimes, both to themselves and others, should form the groundwork of my story, as those consequences might arise in the course of the work. I had some doubt as to the way in which I should draw the character of the maid who had urged the wife of Page to commit the murder. That she must be very wicked was a thing of course; but a common serving damsel would hardly suit with dramatic

the time to dramatise any remarkable incident which occurred in the country. Mr. Collier mentions one of these incidental dramas to have been "The lamentable Tragedy of Page of Plymouth."

effect in the particular kind of scenes I wished to represent. She ought to be raised something above the common order, so that it would not be incongruous to make her speak English instead of Devonshire. She ought, I fancied, to have a *genius for wickedness;* and to carry about her something to excite terror as well as abhorrence. What name to call her was also another point. "Call her," said Mr. Bray, "Betsy Grimbal: that name is formidable enough for any such character as you wish to draw; and, moreover, Betsy Grimbal is not unknown to tradition; though all that is told of her is, that she, instead of committing a murder, was herself murdered. She is said to have been killed by a soldier in the spiral stairs of the tower flanking the old archway in our garden. Hence that tower bears her name. The stains on the wall, called her blood used sadly to frighten me when I was a child."

It was agreed that Betsy Grimbal was, therefore, to become the guilty associate and attendant of Page's wife, and to play a busy and prominent part in the story. And as I wished as much as possible to combine every fragment of tradition, or to derive some hint from it, that would suggest incident and character, even the slightest legend of old times was not to be neglected. It struck me that I could make Lady Howard into a character. All I knew of her then was, that she bore the reputation of having been hard-hearted in her lifetime. That for some crime she had committed (nobody knew what) she was said to be doomed to run in the shape of a hound from the *gateway of Fitz-ford* to Oakhampton park, between the hours of midnight and cock-crowing, and to return with a single blade of

grass in her mouth whence she started; and this she was to do till every blade was picked, when the world would be at an end.

Dr. Jago, the clergyman of Milton Abbot, however, told me that occasionally she was said to ride in *a coach of bones* up the West-street towards the Moor; and an old man of this place told a friend of mine the same story, only adding that "*he had seen her in it scores of times!*" A lady also who was once a resident here, and whom I met in company, assured me that, happening many years before to pass the old gateway at Fitz-ford, as the church clock struck *twelve*, in returning from a party, she had herself *seen the hound start!* Now I verily believe the lady told truth; for my husband's father, many years ago, rented Fitz-ford; it was the residence of his hind or bailiff, and there the late Mr. Bray used to keep a pack of hounds: it is, therefore, nothing improbable that one of them might have slipped the kennel, and ran out as the church clock struck twelve, and so personated, in the eyes of imagination, the terrific spectre of the old tale. My husband can remember that when a boy it was a common saying with the gentry at a party—"Come, it is growing late, let us begone, or we shall meet Lady Howard as she starts from Fitz-ford."

The above anecdotes were all I knew about her, when I determined to make her take a part in my story; but *the hound, the gateway,* and *the coach of bones,* were all fine hints for imagination to work upon. I walked down to Fitz-ford with Mr. Bray and reconnoitred the spot, and there, such is the bewitching power of locality, all seemed to rush at once into my mind. The plot was formed with ease, and

I went home determined to connect the adventure of Fitz and Slanning, under the gateway, with Lady Howard; to give her a real hound, a *blood hound*, instead of turning her into one; and then the coach of bones and her riding in it after death, might be made a legend, in consequence of a great crime which, by an evil passion, she had been led to determine on committing whilst riding in her own coach, in all her pride, to the house of the person she had it in view to betray to ruin here on earth. This rude sketch of a plot was soon worked into shape and committed to paper. Mr. Bray named the hound *Redfang*, as a significant appellative for a dog whose instinct was to become the agency in assisting to bring about the catastrophe. I had never seen a bloodhound, and I wished to be correct in describing one. Here fortune favoured me again; for the younger Lewis, the animal painter, in a few days arrived at our house. I ventured to tell him my wishes, and he very good-naturedly made me a most spirited sketch of a blood-hound; for he had painted one from life, I think he said, in Scotland. From that drawing I described Redfang, and Mr. Lewis's account of the habits and instinct of the animal was of great service.

The character of the Jew was suggested by our acquaintance with a most honest Israelite, a German, Mr. Rosenthal, who used to come to the vicarage to teach Mr. Bray Hebrew. The terms of instruction he left to him; and when the time came for payment, he actually wanted to return Mr. Bray some part of the money, insisting that he ought not to be paid so much for his lessons. There was so much mildness, feeling, and gratitude about poor

Rosenthal, that I endeavoured minutely to observe him, and to sketch him in Levi, as a very different sort of character to what we generally expect to find in a Jew. I believe I have here stated every fragment of tradition that suggested to me any name, character, or incident in the tale, excepting the real story of Fitz; which, as it is the principal, and the one after which I called the work, I here conclude with giving exactly as I found it in Prince's 'Worthies of Devon.'

"John Fitz, of Fitz-ford, Esquire, was in his time a very eminent counsellor at law; in demonstration thereof (continues this biographer, after giving the list of his generations) is a large volume he is said to have left behind him in manuscript, called 'Fitz his Reports.' I think it was never printed; and whether yet in being I know not. He was also preferred, in his time, to the honour and trust of being high sheriff of the county of Devon, an. 23d, some say an. 25th, of Queen Elizabeth's reign. He married Mary, daughter of Sir John Sydenham, of Brimton, in Somersetshire; but was very unfortunate in his issue, of which there is this remarkable story. Mr. Fitz being a curious as well as a learned person, had been prying into the secrets of astrology; his lady being with child, he would needs be inquiring into the fortune of her burthen before she was delivered; who, being just ready to fall into travail, he erected a scheme to calculate the matter; and as it often falls out in such unjustifiable curiosities, finding at that time a very unlucky position of the heavens, he desired the midwife, if possible, to hinder the birth but for one hour, which not being to be done, he declared that the child would come to

an unhappy end, and undo his family. And it fell out accordingly, for that birth proving a son, though afterwards knighted by the name of Sir John Fitz of Fitz-ford, yet having first slain Sir Nicholas Slanning of this county, Kt., and after that one or two more, he fell upon his own sword, and destroyed himself."

In a notice respecting the family of Slanning, Prince thus states the circumstance more at large. "This gentleman came to an untimely end, being slain in a quarrel that happened between him and Sir John Fitz, near Tavistock, in this county. The matter, it seems, was likely to have been composed, but the villain, Fitz's man, twitting his master with a 'What, play child's play! Come to fight, and now put up your sword!' made him draw again, and Slanning's foot in stepping back (having his spurs on) hitching in the ground, was there, unfortunately and foully, killed: whereupon Sir John Fitz, by the interest of his friends, sued out his pardon soon after this happened, which was in 1599. But although Queen Elizabeth was pleased to forgive him, Slanning's widow would not; but brought her appeal, and obtained a verdict against Sir John for damages, who thereupon was forced to comply with her, by granting some part of his estate to her and her family, who are still in possession of it."

"After this," continues Prince, "as one sin became (as oftentimes it doth) the punishment of another, Sir John was so unhappy to be guilty of a second murder; and thereupon flying from his county (though not from his own guilty conscience) so far as Salisbury, or thereabouts, in his way to London, to sue out a second pardon, hearing some-

body about his chamber-door early in the morning, and fearing it had been officers come to apprehend him, by mistake in the dark he slew one of the house come to wake him, as he desired, in order to his journey. When the lights came that made him sensible of the horrid and atrocious fact which he had afresh committed, overwhelmed with sorrow and despair, he fell upon his own sword and slew himself. Unto which passage that tetrastick formerly found upon this monument, now nearly expunged by the finger of time, doth plainly relate, where Sir Nicholas Slanning, by an apostrophe, speaketh thus of Fitz:"—

Idem cædis erat nostræ, simul author et ultor;
Trux homicida mei, mox homicida sui.
Quemque in me primum, mox in se condidit ensem:
O! nostrum summi Judicis arbitrium.

Prince has thus closely rendered it in English:—

"He author of my murder was, and the revenger too:
A bloody murderer of me, and then himself he slew.
The very sword which in mine first, he bathed his own blood.
O! of the highest Judge 'twixt us, the arbitration good!"

Mr. Bray has rendered it thus:—

"I in my murderer my avenger found,
Who dealt to both the homicidal wound:
For, of just heaven the retribution due,
Me, and himself, by the same sword he slew."

The first part of the above melancholy tale I followed closely in my novel, and represented the old lawyer engaged in his astrological pursuits, and alarmed for the fate he had so darkly predicted respecting his only son. The latter part was too full of horrors; and therefore, blending fiction with truth, I ventured to create a cause for the quarrel

between Slanning and Sir John Fitz, that should be connected with the leading incidents of the story even from its opening; and instead of John Fitz killing three persons, I thought one would be quite enough, and so concluded much according to the real narrative. Tradition marks the old gateway of Fitz-ford, still in existence, as the scene of the fatal duel and the spot where Slanning fell.

Whilst 'Fitz of Fitz-ford' was going through the press, my brother was collecting his materials for some account of Tavistock and its Abbey, for the pages of the Gentleman's Magazine, from which I have occasionally made extracts, as mentioned in these letters. During various researches, he examined more carefully than I had done (for my attention had been confined to the *story* of the astrologer) Prince's account of the *genealogy* of the family of Fitz, their marriages, births, &c. Judge, therefore, how much I was surprised at my own carelessness, when my brother wrote me word that I had made a great oversight about Lady Howard; for in tracing the alliances of this wife of *four* husbands, he had found she was the sole child and heiress of Sir John Fitz, who killed Slanning, and afterwards fell on his own sword. Had Lady Howard been an historical character, this would have been a grievous mistake on my part, for I consider a novelist not justified in misleading in any important points connected with history; but as she was a private individual, conspicuous only for her fortune and her bad name, the error appeared to me of no consequence; and I might hope to be excused also on the ground of that license which is extended to novelists as well as poets, in cases of a similar

nature. At all events I made the blunder, and am therefore bound to acknowledge rather than excuse it, by at once declaring that Lady Howard, as far as her birth and her share in the action of my story goes, is quite as fictitious as the other characters which are wholly so.

Respecting Sir John, or "Old Page," I am informed by Mr. Hughes (who is well acquainted with many local interesting stories and traditions), that he was an eminent merchant in his day, commonly called "wealthy Page." He lived in Woolster Street, Plymouth, in the house since known by the name of the Mayoralty. It stood untouched till the rebuilding of the Guildhall, when it was taken down. The old house was long an object of curiosity on account of the atrocious murder there committed. Mr. Hughes likewise tells me that some years ago, previous to the repairs of St. Andrew's church, Plymouth, Page's coffin was discovered, on breaking the ground near the communion table for the interment of a lady named Lovell. The inscription on the coffin proved it to contain the body of the "wealthy Page." It was opened; the remains were found in a remarkably perfect state, but crumbled to dust on being exposed to the air. So great was the curiosity of the populace, that during several days hundreds pressed in to gratify it, and every relic that could be stolen, if but a nail from the coffin, was carried off.

There is no authority but that of tradition in support of the assertion that the wife of Page was one of the daughters of Judge Glanville, and received sentence of death from the lips of her own father. Supposing the story to be true, Prince has

carefully suppressed it. I am, however, disposed to think it is not true; as my venerable friend, the Rev. Richard Polwhele, of Polwhele, Cornwall, (descended from the judge by the marriage of his daughter *Dionysia* with a Polwhele) writes me word—"That though he had heard his grandmother tell the story of Glanville passing the sentence on his own child, it was not, even in her time, considered true." It strikes me, after a careful examination of whatever circumstance could throw light on the subject, that some confusion, some mistake has arisen, in consequence of *another Devonshire judge* having really been placed in so trying and painful a situation as that of sitting on the bench and passing sentence on his own son. I here give the circumstance from Prince.

"So great a lover of justice was Judge Hody, that according to his oath, and the obligation of his honour, he most exactly administered it to all without favour or affection. A traditionary confirmation whereof in the family I crave leave here to relate, not as redounding to the disparagement of that, but the high honour of this grand justiciary. 'Tis said when his son Thomas was tried before him at the public assizes, and found guilty by his country of a capital crime, he with his own mouth pronounced sentence of death upon him. For which reason, 'tis observed, there hath not ever since been any of the name Thomas in this family. And when the unfortunate son, overwhelmed with sorrow and melancholy, killed himself the next night after, the father, esteeming him degenerate, would not so much as honour his funeral with his presence."

This Judge Hody lived in the reigns of Henry VII. and VIII., and I cannot help thinking that the above story about his son has given rise to a similar tradition about Glanville and his daughter. For though Prince says in another part of his curious and ingenious work, that he "liketh not to tell old tales that are disreputable to honourable families, and therefore leaveth them unnoticed whenever he can do so"—yet we see he does tell the tale about Judge Hody's son; why, therefore, suppress that of Glanville's eldest or youngest daughter, had it been true? If true or false, so striking a tradition was quite sufficient authority for a writer of romance; and as it afforded a good subject for imagination to work upon, both in character and incident, I felt fully justified in making Glanville a judge who had passed sentence on his own daughter in my story.

I should much like to see the old play (mentioned by Collier in his 'History of the Drama') called the 'Lamentable Tragedy of Page of Plymouth,' as that would most likely settle the question; for it cannot be supposed that a circumstance of so impressive a nature, and known to all the kingdom, would have been passed unnoticed by the dramatist, whoever he might have been; and as it was the fashion of the time to dramatise any remarkable incidents that occurred in real life, a feeling of delicacy would not have been dreamt of to prevent it, though Judge Glanville was then alive, since it could be no more shocking to his feelings to represent the act in which he performed a painful duty, than to bring forward that in which his daughter was seen acting the crime of murder in its most atrocious form.

There is another and a very interesting tale respecting a son of Judge Glanville: this is recorded by Prince; and I once entertained the idea of founding on it a story, as one of a series of tales that should attempt to bring into play all the most interesting legends of this part of England, as I think many of them are not less worthy notice than the legends of Scotland and Wales. The striking circumstances to which I now allude are connected with Kilworthy; but before I relate them, I must commence, in regular order, a sketch of the life of Sir John Glanville, of which they form a part.

"Sir John Glanville, Serjeant at Law, was born," says Prince, "at Tavistock, that fruitful seed-plot of eminent and learned men in this county. He was the second son of Judge Glanville, aforementioned, an honourable and worthy person."

This gentleman, like his father, had not the advantage of receiving his education at either of the universities. He was bred an attorney, but afterwards removing to Lincoln's Inn, with the help of his father's notes, he became skilled in his profession. For some time he practised as a counsellor, and his reputation increasing with his years, he was at length elected recorder of Plymouth, and served as burgess for that town in several parliaments. In the fifth of King Charles I. he was chosen Lent reader of his house, and in 1637 advanced to the rank of Serjeant at Law. About this time he had the honour of becoming Speaker to the House of Commons. Clarendon, who mentions the circumstance, says he was—"a man very equal to the work, very well acquainted with the proceedings in parliaments, of a quick conception, and of a

ready, voluble expression, dexterous in disposing the house, and very acceptable to them." Glanville, who more than once, in his character of burgess for Plymouth, had been little friendly to the prerogative of the crown, nevertheless, on seeing to what extremities the factious and discontented were disposed to carry all things in their efforts to subvert the church, the monarchy, and the laws, proved himself active in their defence; and so worthily did he conduct the affairs of the house in its first meeting, 1640, when, after a long interval, the king had again summoned a parliament, that in the following year he received the honour of knighthood from the hand of that beloved master.

It is not a little remarkable that, though he filled the office of Speaker at a time when the most stormy debates were carried on, and often interposed his authority to maintain the rules and order of proceeding, which so many were disposed to subvert, his popularity remained unshaken, and he was held in universal respect, though known to have the king's interest at heart, and to be devoted to his service. Such is the respect which a man who acts conscientiously, and serves the cause of loyalty from a sense of its justice, will generally command, even from his enemies. Glanville lost no whit of that paid to him, till the factious became openly the rebellious, and war was proclaimed on either side. It was then that his enemies, who were the King's also, having him entirely within their own power, and finding he was not to be shaken, conferred on him the highest honour he had yet attained—that of being made a sufferer in a just and righteous cause.

Before matters, however, had arrived to an open

rupture between the King and the Commons, Glanville particularly distinguished himself in the committee respecting subsidies, which, by a message through Sir Harry Vane, the unfortunate Charles had requested might be granted him in lieu of ship-money, adjudged to be his right, but which he would not insist upon, out of affection to his people, since they were unwilling to pay it. Deprived of these means, by his own forbearance, he prayed the Parliament to grant the supplies that he found so absolutely necessary at such a crisis. This allusion to "right" and "ship-money" was exceedingly offensive to some of the more violent members; and, after a sharp debate, it was resolved to go again into committee of the whole house, and all present seemed to wish "that whatsoever," says Clarendon, "they should give the king should be a free testimony of their affection and duty, without any release of ship-money, which deserved no consideration, but in a short time would appear null and void."

Hampden, the most popular and most wily man among them, and who had so lately defended the ship-money suit against the crown, did not lose such a moment as this; and judging the subject ripe for the question, desired it might be put—"Whether the House would consent to the proposition made by the king, as it was contained in the message of Sir Harry Vane?" This the arch-rebel well knew would be sure to meet with a negative from all who thought the sum too great, and were not pleased that it should be given in lieu of ship-money, though the king had said nothing more than the whole house knew to be truth—namely, that it had been adjudged his right; and

his offer to waive this right, from love to his people, would have been hailed as a proof of his desire to render them happy, and to conciliate them, by any other than men who had determined the poor king never should be right, till wrong had hurled him from the throne.

At this call of "Question," Serjeant Glanville as one of the members only in committee) arose; and though he seldom spoke on such occasions, yet now, in what Clarendon calls "a most pathetical speech," in which he excelled, he endeavoured to prevail with the house to entertain freely and grant the king's desire, as an act that would prove of great benefit to the nation at large, inasmuch as it could not fail to reconcile his majesty to parliaments for ever, by a ready testimony of their affection. After having endeavoured to raise in his hearers a kind and dutiful feeling towards the king, he next showed them, in the clearest manner, how very inconsiderable would be the subsidy to those, taken individually, by whose contributions it must be raised. The Serjeant had computed his own assessment: he named the sum to which it would amount; and all present knowing how large was his estate, and therefore that most men would have far less to pay, the matter appeared too insignificant to be worthy any more debating.

Glanville saw the powerful impression he had made by his eloquent appeal: he had stirred up some feeling of generosity towards the king; and had shown, by the simplest and most certain test—that of an arithmetical calculation—how little such generosity would really cost themselves. Willing, therefore, still further to conciliate them (and in

this we see something of the lawyer as well as of the orator), he let the house know that, in matters of *law* affecting right, he was as jealous as themselves; and he let fall, in his zeal, some severe expressions against the impost of ship-money, and against the judgment lately given in its favour. "This," says Clarendon, "from one known to be very learned, how necessary and artificial soever to reconcile the affections of the house to the matter in question, very much irreconciled him at court, and to those upon whom he had the greatest dependence, though there was scarce ever a speech that more gathered up and united the inclinations of a popular council to the speaker; and if the question had been presently put, it was believed the number of the dissenters would not have appeared great."

The failure of this affair of the subsidies, principally by the mismanagement and misrepresentation of Sir Harry Vane, who so often betrayed the unhappy king, whilst pretending to serve him, caused the speedy dissolution of that parliament, which Charles too soon had bitter cause to lament. Some factious spirits—Hampden, St. John, and cunning Pym at their head—rejoiced at it; but all who wished well to the king and to the country saw that, taken in the aggregate, such a number of dispassionate and well-intentioned men would not be returned again; and that, in another house, which Charles would too soon be obliged to call, the factious would return no representatives but such as were willing to go all lengths with the evil spirits of the times. Dissolving a parliament such as this, at a crisis

when the elements of rebellion were gathering strength, and combining their several powers before the bursting of the storm, was, on the part of the king, as great an act of temerity as it would have been for the captain of a vessel to cut away his cables, and send the ship out of port to buffet before the tempest, amidst rocks and shoals, when, by keeping in harbour, though the gale might sing in the shrouds, and beat upon her, it could not have force sufficient to drive her from her moorings, or to make her the wreck of its unmitigable fury. Charles never recovered that false step of ill-advised policy; and when he was forced to leave the treasonable parliament which he afterwards called, and but too soon hastened his ruin, his faithful Speaker, Glanville, followed him to Oxford, where he devoted all the energies of a mind naturally energetic to the service of his prince.

At Oxford, with some other loyalists of great merit, in a public Convocation, he was created Doctor of Civil Law, in 1643. And being now considered by the rebels "a desperate malignant," in the year 1645 they disabled him from sitting as a member at Westminster. Shortly after returning to his own home in Devon, the king's cause no sooner declined in the west than he was seized and committed to prison (probably at Exeter), and there remained a long while in captivity—an honourable example of how patiently and how cheerfully a good cause can enable a man to suffer the greatest injuries. He was not released till the year 1648, when he bought his liberty, by a heavy fine being laid on his estates. Loyd, in his "Loyal Sufferers," gives the highest

character of Glanville; and from him we learn that this imprisonment was not the first to which the worthy Serjeant had been exposed.

He states that Glanville's first durance was on shipboard, in 1626, for having spoken his mind too freely on some points respecting the prerogative; that afterwards he suffered six several hard imprisonments (one of which was two years in the Tower of London) for declaring himself "as honestly in some law points against a treasonable popularity;" and so high did his character stand in the estimation of all men, that, notwithstanding his so recent captivity, the University of Oxford, ever honourable and consistent, even under the most dangerous circumstances and times, was bold enough to return Sir John Glanville as her burgess in one of the parliaments held in the days of the usurper. But Glanville's attachment to the exiled family of the murdered king was known to be unshaken; he was not, therefore, suffered to take his seat. His spirit undaunted by those who in this arbitrary manner had opposed his just election, and determined, if it could not aid him in asserting the rights of the injured in the general assembly of his countrymen, that he would defend them as long as one law remained unsubverted to bear him out, he now pleaded openly, as a lawyer, the causes of many a banished royalist; amongst others, those of Lord Craven and Sir John Stawel: the latter being a prisoner, and particularly obnoxious to many who then held the reins of government in their own hands.

To the honour of this truly great man, be it also spoken, that he possessed that most certain mark of

superior merit, both of head and heart—the power to distinguish it in others, and the will to bring it forward with honour and success. It was Serjeant Glanville who first appreciated the then obscure talents of Sir Matthew Hale,—obscure by fortune, by the want of opportunity, and doubly so by an idle course of life. This fault he represented to Hale in strong terms, roused his energies, encouraged his perseverance, and opened to him that path by which he afterwards arose to so much dignity and repute.

The story I am now about to relate (the truth of which there is no cause to doubt) opens to us the character of Glanville in its most amiable light. In reflecting on it we feel that glow of pleasure which both young and old experience whilst they listen to a deed of heroic generosity in the days of chivalry, when men were heroes because they were Christians, and thought no action could be worthy the honour of a knight that was not founded on the high principles and true glory emanating from their obedience to God, to his Church here on earth, and to their anointed King.

Judge Glanville, the possessor of that fair estate of Kilworthy, so often spoken of in this letter, intended to settle it on his son Francis, as the elder born, who was to bear the honours of his house, and to convey them unsullied to his posterity; but Francis disappointed his hopes. He proved idle and vicious; and, like the prodigal in the Gospel, would leave his father's house to herd among swine, for such are the low and the wicked. Seeing there was no prospect of his amendment, the Judge gave

the inheritance of the elder to the younger born, and settled his estate on John, afterwards Serjeant, Glanville.

Francis, on his father's death, finding those threats which had been occasionally held out to induce him to reform his wild career were fully executed (for he had never really believed them to be other than threats), was overcome with grief and dismay. He was the elder born — the natural heritor of the estate; and he, like Esau, had sold his birthright for dishonour. This reflection, and the thought that his father had died in too just anger towards him, so wrought on a mind in which there lay hid strong, though hitherto perverted, feelings, that he became melancholy. Riot could no longer soothe the pangs of conscience; and when, like the prodigal, all was gone, instead of giving himself up to utter despair, he wisely returned to God, as to an offended and only Father, his earthly parent being alike removed either from his sorrows or his repentance. Good resolutions are the guides to virtue, but practice is the path; and that must be followed with an unwearied step. Frank Glanville, having once set his foot in the way, did not turn back; and so steadily did he advance in his progress on the right road, that what his father could never do with him whilst he lived (and the spendthrift entertained the expectation of being his heir), he now did for himself, when he was little better than an outcast from his early home: his life became completely changed.

Sir John Glanville, his younger brother, wishing to prove him before he gave him better countenance, for some time left him to himself, till he felt con-

vinced his brother's penitence was as lasting as it was sincere: he then sent and invited him to be present at a feast that he purposed making for his friends in the halls of Kilworthy. The most sumptuous preparations were made; the banquet was set forth with all the liberal hospitality of the time; the guests assembled were numerous and honourable; and music sounded through the halls its varied and most enlivening notes.

Sir John Glanville took the repentant prodigal by the hand, seated him at the table, and, after many dishes had been served, ordered one that was covered to be set before his brother Francis; and then, with a cheerful countenance, he bade him raise the cover. Francis did so. All present were surprised on seeing that the dish contained nothing but written parchments; whereupon Sir John Glanville, wishing all his friends to know the respect in which he now held his repentant brother, and at the same time with that true generosity which seeks to lighten the obligation it confers, by lessening its merit, told Francis, and those who were assembled, that what he now did was only the same act that he felt assured would have been performed by his father, could he have lived to witness the happy change which they all knew had taken place in his eldest son: therefore, as in honour bound, he freely restored to him the whole estate.

The scene that followed may be readily imagined; the "lost that was found" fell on his brother's neck and wept aloud, and if there was one heart in that assembly more than all the rest rejoicing in the general joy, it was the heart of the generous, the

noble, the just brother, who now most truly felt the force of these words of the Lord of life: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

It is honourable to both brothers that Francis proved deserving of being thus restored to his inheritance; he lived to receive the distinction of knighthood from the hand of Charles II. Sir John Glanville's generosity is a proof that the truly great in public duties are not less so in private ones; indeed I should ever doubt that man's claim to patriotism and public virtue, who could be unjust, arrogant, or arbitrary in the relations of domestic life. Sir Francis Glanville some years after married Elizabeth, the daughter of William Crymes, Esq., of Devon, and left a son named Francis, who died without issue: in consequence of which his estates came to his sister's only daughter (by her husband Mr. William Kelly), and she married Ambrose Manaton, Esq., which caused the noble mansion of Kilworthy to pass into that family *.

Sir John, or Serjeant Glanville, whom I consider not only one of the greatest men ever born in Tavistock, but whose virtues render him an honour to the kingdom at large, lived to see monarchy restored: he was favourably received, as he deserved to be, by

* The Manatons were very celebrated persons, of honourable repute, who for generations kept up the old style of hospitality and kindness to their friends and tenantry. An old house, with the crest of a unicorn rampant upon the ornamental parts of the front, still points out their town residence in Tavistock. Their beautiful old-fashioned service of pewter plates, dishes, &c., was a few years since sold by auction. Mr. Bray's mother bought it, and we now every day dine off the grand Manaton service, decorated with arms and unicorn, at the Vicarage.

Charles II., on his accession to his father's throne, and was appointed King's Serjeant. In all probability he would have risen to yet higher honours had not God, who endowed him so largely on earth with his richest gift, a truly noble spirit, conferred upon it that immortality which must have been its highest reward, in the year 1661. He was buried in the church of Broad Hinton, in Wilts; where he resided for some time before his death. His widow, Winifred, placed a monument over his grave, with an inscription, in which even monumental praise could scarcely equal his merit.

Whilst employed in the agreeable task of penning this slight sketch of his life, Mr. Charles Crapp, a respectable mercer of this town, had the kindness to send me a very curious manuscript in his possession, which he highly values, giving an account of the lands disposed for charitable purposes in the parish of Tavistock. In this manuscript I find an entry, dated 29th March, 1649, stating that our good Serjeant did give in trust to certain gentlemen of this place, all named, the tenement called South Brent Tor, to the intent that the rent or profits of the said estate shall be thus disposed of:—That "the feoffees, their heirs, assigns, and successors, or the most of them that will be present in the school-house on Friday in the Easter week, between the hours of ten and eleven, do elect a towardly youth, born of honest parents within the said borough, whose parents or friends are poor, and without deceit reputed to be unable to maintain such boy, and to dispose the profits for his maintenance at one of the *universities;* and when all the feoffees (trustees) are dead, to eight

survivors must renew the estate to others of which the eight masters of the town and parish must be of them."

The manuscript (which contains a long list of charitable donations) says—"N.B. These abstracts were taken out of the new feoffment deeds, dated 21st August, 1738."

To conclude, as Sir John Glanville was a man of virtue and talents himself, so, as we have seen, was he the friend to both in others. His works were principally of a political nature. Some of his parliamentary speeches may be found in Rushworth's collection. The following lines are the only fragment of his poetry that I have ever had the good fortune to meet with. They are addressed to his accomplished friend and brother townsman Browne, the author of 'Britannia's Pastorals.'

> Ingenious swaine! that highly dost adorne
> Clear Tavy, on whose brinck we both were borne!
> Just praise in me would ne'er be thought to move
> From thy sole worth, but from thy partiall love:
> Wherefore I will not do thee so much wrong,
> As by such mixture to alloy thy song.
> But while kind strangers rightly praise each grace
> Of thy chaste muse, I (from the happy place
> That brought thee forth, and thinks it not unfit
> To boast now that it erst bred such a wit)
> Would only have it knowne I much rejoice
> To hear such matters sung by such a voice.
>
> JOHN GLANVILLE.

The sons of Serjeant Glanville were also distinguished for talent and worth. One of them, John, was a barrister at law, who rose to great eminence in his profession: he married a daughter of Sir Edmund Fortescue of Fallopit, Devon; and at

length retired to Broad Hinton, where he died, and was buried near his father.

Another son of the Serjeant was even yet more eminent, though his career was as brief as it was glorious. He was a youth of the greatest promise, and possessed talents which, had he been longer spared, could not have failed to become alike honourable and useful to himself and to society. But bearing in his breast a high and martial spirit, he could not brook standing idly looking on when the king was hard pressed by his enemies. He joined the royal cause, and in the rank of lieutenant-colonel maintained the town of Bridgewater against the tremendous assault that was made against it by the parliament forces. In this action he showed wonderful gallantry and courage; and being resolute to keep the town till the last, he, with several other gentlemen of like spirit, fell covered with wounds and honour in the twenty-eighth year of his age, on the fatal 20th of July, 1645. Thus perished Francis Glanville the younger. Where he was buried is not certainly known; but most likely the body was removed from Bridgewater, as the royalists generally begged their dead might be restored when they were persons of eminence. Some years after, a monument was erected to his memory in the church of Broad Hinton.

Joseph Glanville, chaplain in ordinary to Charles II., and author of the famous book on 'Witches,' was born at Plymouth; and I only slightly mention him here, because he was a branch from the ancient Kilworthy stock of Glanville. Not being of our parish, it is not my place to write his life; yet I cannot forbear mentioning that, in addition to many

other works, he left a posthumous volume of sermons that are of the highest merit, and breathe the lofty spirit of those glorious old divines which render the reign of Charles II. as remarkable for the learning, the piety, the genius, and the exemplary conduct of the clergy, as it was depraved and infamous in that of the morals of the king and of the court. These sermons have become very scarce; Mr. Bray is so fortunate as to possess a copy of them. Their characteristic is energy; the authority of the Church is maintained with a dignity that becomes the subject, and the boldest arguments (though they must have been little pleasing to many hearers of his day) are brought forward and enforced with the most powerful eloquence of feeling and of truth.

It is melancholy to relate—such are the changes of time and fortune—that the last descendant of the *elder* branch of the illustrious family of Glanville died a very few years ago in the poor-house at Bradstone in this neighbourhood. He was a huntsman, and known by the name of Jack Glanville. From all I can learn about him, he appears to have been an original character; possessed of a good deal of sense, and some humour; and valued himself on his blood, of which he considered there was none nobler in the whole county of Devon. When I heard of the obscure state in which he was brought up and died, I could not help thinking what a fit object he would have been, in early life, to have profited by the charitable bequest of his good and great ancestor, the Serjeant—and a university education might have rescued the last of the line from debasement and poverty, and have once more restored it to an honourable place in the families of

Devon. But he is dead and gone, the elder line extinct; and it is but one more example that there is no permanence in the families of the great, but that found in the merit and virtues of the individuals that compose them.

Tavistock also gave birth to the celebrated Sir John Maynard, Serjeant at Law. His father, Alexander, was a younger branch of the Maynards of Brixton, and removing to Tavistock, he resided in a house that stood on the site of the Abbey, where his son John was born. The character and fame of Maynard are so intimately connected with the history of this county, that they can alone be appreciated by those who render themselves familiar with the stirring events of the years in which he lived. In the times of Charles I., though Clarendon says "he had too much complied and concurred with their irregular and unjust proceedings," he nevertheless argued stoutly against the treasonable measure of voting in the house that no more appeals or addresses be made to the king. During the struggle between popery and protestantism in the reign of James II., he stood firm, and throughout his long life he was not less distinguished for his integrity in public affairs than he was for his profound legal skill. He frequently took his seat in the house as member for Beer Alston, a small town that was first represented in the reign of Elizabeth.

Little is recorded of Maynard's private life, but that little is to his honour. He was of a munificent disposition, and managed with great care and prudence the large sums of which he became trustee, for various charities, on the death of the donor, his friend Mr. Elizæus Heale. He also, from his own

estate, devoted a considerable sum to the uses of charity. He lived to a very great age; and after the landing of King William, when presented at court, the king on being told that Sir John Maynard was upwards of ninety years old, observed to him that he must have outlived all the judges and eminent men of his day. "Yes," replied the veteran lawyer, "and I should have outlived the laws too, if it had not been for the happy arrival of your majesty."

Sir John Maynard died in 1690, and was succeeded in his large possessions by a son, who bequeathed them to his two daughters in default of male issue; both ladies were nobly married, the one into the house of Hobart, Earl of Buckinghamshire, and the other to the Earl of Stamford. Where Serjeant Maynard was buried I do not know; there is no monument to him in our church, and his name is totally forgotten in the place; not the slightest tradition exists concerning him, which induces me to believe that he never resided at Tavistock after his entrance on public life.

LIDFORD CASCADE,

Situated at the distance of about seven miles from Tavistock.

It has just occurred to me, my dear Sir, that I have omitted sending some notice of a most interesting spot in our neighbourhood; I therefore add, by way of postscript to the foregoing letter, the following extract from an old journal of Mr. Bray:—

"The path that leads to the Cascade winds down a steep coppice-wood; and the descent to the river

Lid, that flows beneath, is not a little difficult, being nearly covered with loose stones that slide under one at every step. But before the foot encounters these dangers, the eye may be gratified with a striking view of the tower and castle of Lidford, backed by the distant hills of Dartmoor, at the end of a deep ravine, formed by the interjunction of several woody promontories.

"At the bottom of the hill, after walking a short distance by the side of the Lid, on turning round a projecting rock, the cascade bursts suddenly upon the sight. The surprise is for a while kept up by the appearance of such a continuity of foam rushing from so precipitous a height. To this the native blackness of the rock, rendered more so by the glossiness of humidity, forms a striking contrast. But, ere long, reflection shows the defects that did not at first present themselves. The fall is too perpendicular to be picturesque; and the space in front is so confined that you can hardly get either on the one side or the other to throw it into an oblique direction. It is not sufficiently wide, nor broken; there being only one place, as seen from below, where there is any projection of the water. And the stream is generally so small that it merely trickles down the rock, unless increased by rains, or discharged in a torrent from the sluice above; for it is nothing but a mill-stream that is thus hurried from a woody height into the river Lid beneath. Some years ago the trees, which have been since cut down and are succeeded by a kind of low coppice wood, served in a degree to break it, and certainly greatly added to the beauty of the scene.

"In order to form an idea of the real height of the

cascade, I forced my way through the bushes, and over some boggy ground to the spot where what may be properly considered as the fall begins. It is a narrow channel between the summits of two woody promontories. That on the left terminates in a perpendicular rock about thirty feet above the stream. To avoid this obstacle we crossed the water and climbed up the opposite side. By the assistance of the boughs, for the whole is a coppice wood, we let ourselves down on a rock about twenty feet from the head of the cascade, at the bottom of what may be called the first fall. Here the water flows down the surface of a smooth sloping rock, almost in a regular curve; within which is a deep hollow recess, which I at first thought the entrance to a cave, but found that it reached very little within the sloping rock above described. A tree, throwing itself across from the opposite side of this recess, added much to the effect, which was not a little increased by the fern and other pendant plants nodding on the top.

"At this spot my servant tied a cord to one of the branches of the trees, and descended by the side of the stream, whilst I remained to untie it when he should give the signal by shaking it. This being given, I followed him and found for about fifty feet the channel is sinuous and broken. Here, as there is almost a straight and smooth descent, we threw the lead into the midst of the water, and it was carried down with the utmost rapidity to the top of the last fall, the distance of about one hundred feet.

"The effect of the cascade is here particularly striking, as you see an unbroken continuance of foam descending in a straight line, till, by leaping

over a more perpendicular fall, it is lost to the eye, and the scene terminated by the flat and narrow dingle through which the river finds its way below. The scene was altogether so novel as hardly to appear natural, but seemed as if it were inverted by reflexion, and not much unlike the effect produced by bending the head so as to see objects with the eye almost upside down. The last fall is about sixty feet, so that the whole height, according to my calculation, is about two hundred and thirty feet: of course, however, a deduction must be made from this oblique direction to bring it to its perpendicular or real height.

"On ascending by the regular path, through the coppice, I could not but take a farewell look at the fall below. About half way up the path deviates to the bottom of a rock, where you catch through the trees a view of the cascade in its greatest impetuosity; and, at a considerable depth beneath, the same stream peaceably pursuing its course to join the Lid, small in itself, and still more diminished by the distance.

"*Lidford Bridge*," continues Mr. Bray, "is, perhaps, a greater object of curiosity than the waterfall, from which it is distant about half a mile; as few bridges are so romantically situated, or built over so deep a chasm; while there are cascades innumerable, probably of equal height, and certainly of greater quantity of water.

"It is not seen till the traveller, at a turn of the road, is almost upon it; and many, it is said, have passed it without knowing it was the object of their search. Camden tells us that 'the water is not to be seen, but only the murmur to be heard.' This is

not the case at present; though a few years since, indeed, before some trees were cut down, it was so overhung with branches, and their shade, that the stream below could scarcely be distinguished. By this obscurity, also, a greater impression, no doubt, was made upon the mind, and the imagination was easily misled into exaggeration.

"By destroying them, particularly on the north-east side of the river, another disadvantage has ensued; for, holding by their branches and resting against their trunks, it was possible to let one's self down so as to have a view of the bridge overhead, and the water dashing amid the rocks beneath. It is best seen now from a field on the south-west side, through some trees, whence may be discerned the bridge covered with ivy hanging in wild luxuriance, the narrow and broken chasm, with some trees starting from its sides, and the water foaming below through its rocky channel. On the left hand Lidford tower opportunely presents itself to improve and identify the picture.

"Mr. Polwhele presents us with many different descriptions of the bridge, as well as the cascade at Lidford, but almost all of them greatly exaggerated. Risdon, as quoted by him, speaking of the river beneath, says, 'It maketh such a hideous noise, that, being only heard and not seen, it causeth a kind of fear to the passengers, seeming to them that look down to it a deep abyss, and may be numbered amongst the wonders of this kingdom.'

"A person is said to have arrived at Lidford in the middle of the night, to the great astonishment of the inhabitants, on finding from him that he came in the direction of the bridge, as they knew it had

been lately broken down. The traveller, however, had remarked nothing more than that his horse had made a sudden spring; but on being afterwards led to the tremendous chasm, he was struck with a mingled sensation of horror, surprise, and thankfulness at the danger he had so providentially escaped.

"Another remarkable occurrence happened not many years since on the same spot. Captain Williams having formed the dreadful resolution of destroying himself, rode from Exeter, late at night, to Lidford Bridge, and endeavoured to spur his horse over the parapet, as was afterwards discovered by the marks of its shoes on the stones; but finding his efforts useless he turned the horse adrift, and, in hopes to conceal the deed, threw the saddle and bridle over the bridge, and followed afterwards himself. But, as the former became entangled in the branches of the trees, they soon led to a discovery, and the body of the unfortunate sufferer was found amid the rocks below.

"Lidford,* that hardly deserves now even the name of a village, was a place of such antiquity and consequence as, according to tradition, to have entertained Julius Cæsar and his whole army on his second arrival in this island. But in the year 997 it was spoiled and ravaged by the Danes at the time they pillaged and burnt the Abbey of Tavistock, and laid siege to Exeter.

"It recovered, however, from their inhuman depredations, and in the time of the Conqueror sent

* Lidford, or Lyghatford, was a town of some note during the Saxon heptarchy. Among "specimens of the names of places from the Saxon Chronicle," Polwhele has "Illidaford, Lids-ford, Lidford."

members to Parliament, and had one hundred and twenty-two, or according to others, one hundred and forty burgesses. Lidford sent members in the twenty-eighth and thirtieth of Edward I. Indeed it appears by Doomsday Book that it was wont to be taxed at the same time, and after the same manner with London itself.

"And as a proof of its importance, the custody of the castle was generally committed to persons of the greatest quality. It is the largest parish in the county, or even in the kingdom, as it contains within its limits the whole forest of Dartmoor *. The immense extent of this parish, and the distance of some of its hamlets and villages from the church, caused a petition from several of the parishioners to Walter, Bishop of Exeter, dated 13th September, 1260. In this petition they represented the inconvenience of their attending divine service. In consequence of which the bishop ordered, with the consent of the patrons, that the inhabitants of Balbery and Purshill, two villages on the moor, on account of their distance from Lidford, their mother church 'being eight miles in fair, and fifteen in foul weather,' should resort to Withecombe church; and for such their privileges should pay their tithe lambs, and three parts of their offerings to the parson of Withecombe, and all other tithes to their mother church.

"'Lidford had the privilege of minting in the Anglo-Saxon times.' The mint continued there but a short period, chiefly through the boisterous reign of Ethelred II., and the coins are consequently rare.

* By a late judicial decision, however, a portion of it belongs to the parish of Widdecombe, or Withecombe.

There are two or three of them in the late Dr. Hunter's cabinet.*

"The Castle is a square building, standing on a heap or mound, probably artificial. The entrance is at the north-west. Before it is a spacious area, with a gentle slope, enclosed by two parallel mounds. At the end of this the ground begins to be very precipitous in its descent; which continues, with the opposite side almost equally steep, till it joins the river near the bridge. Thus Lidford must have been a place of considerable strength, approachable only towards the north-east. This naturally accounts for its high antiquity; as there can be no doubt but that the Britons availed themselves of its local advantages in the earliest ages.

"The stairs and floors of the Castle cannot now be trodden without danger, as the greater part of the boards are wanting. The judge's chair, however, remains, and the royal arms over it, in perfect preservation. The infamous Jeffries is reported to have been the last who presided in it. The only thing that seems to have elevated the judge above the rest of the court, is a foot-board at the bottom of the chair. There are rails in front about eight feet distant.† The counsel-table has been removed only within these few years.‡ The ascent to the roof, whence there is a striking and varied view of the neighbouring hills, intersected with deep dells, and bounded on the east by the Dartmoor

* Polwhele's Devon, Vol. I, p. 242.

† Since the above description of the Castle was written, it is so gone to ruin that nothing but the bare walls remain.

‡ "We find upon record that the Assizes, at the commencement of this period (temp. Edward I.), were held at Exeter and Lidford alternately."—Polwhele, Vol. I, p. 270.

tors, and on the west by those of Cornwall, is by steps carried up within the thickness of the wall.

"To the dungeon, which is about sixteen feet by ten, the descent must have been by a ladder, and probably through a trap-door. If this were the case it was completely dark, as there is no window in it, and the room above is lighted only by a single narrow loop-hole." Within this castle was the prison for offenders against the stannary laws, which, in an act of parliament of the year 1512, is described as "one of the most hanious, contagious, and detestable places in the realm." That it had not much improved in its repute a century afterwards, appears from Browne's mention of it in one of his poems in the reign of King James:

> "To lie therein one night 'tis guest
> 'T were better to be stoned and prest,
> Or hang'd—now choose you whether." *

"About half a mile distant from Lidford, up the river, is another Cascade, called Kitt's Steps, or Kitt's Hole. It is conjectured that the name of *Kitt* originated from the circumstance of a woman called Catharine, or *Kitty*, having lost her life here. She was returning from market on the Oakhampton road, which passes very near it, and was riding on a horse with crooks, implements, it is believed, almost peculiar to the west of England. The river Lid was swollen by some heavy rain that had lately fallen on the moor, where it takes its rise, and both horse and rider were carried away by the impetuosity of the torrent. The woman was unfortunately drowned, prevented probably by the crooks from

* See Lyson's Hist.

passing through the rocks; but the horse was found quietly grazing on the bank of the river below.

"This 'cataract,' if it can be called so, may be said to be situated within the recess of a bold and precipitous hill; but it is hardly deserving, I think, the name which is given to it by Polwhele of a '*high promontory.*' I heard no 'echoes of aquatic thunder among the hills;' but it is right perhaps to state that it had *not rained the preceding day,* nor indeed for many days before. It may be proper also to mention that some of the water is now taken from its original channel for the purpose of working a mine; but as it falls again over some rocks about thirty feet from, and nearly opposite to, the cataract itself, it may be doubted whether the noise is not thus increased: at any rate one might naturally expect from this circumstance to find here something like an echo. When the wheel is in motion and the machinery at work, which did not happen to be the case during my visit to it, there must of course be no small addition to the noise; and yet I very much doubt whether, even then, it re-echoes among the hills.

"I was afraid I should find the scene much injured by the mine; but I have little hesitation in saying that I think it an improvement, at least in point of picturesque effect. Over the river in the foreground is thrown a singular kind of bridge, formed, I imagine, of part of an old wheel, or whim. Beyond it, at a little distance, is seen the main fall of the cataract; and, considerably above it, a branch of the river is conveyed by a wooden aqueduct, supported upon rough poles, with the water dropping in filaments from several parts of it, to an

overshot wheel opposite. The accompanying machinery over the shaft, with the flag-staff on the highest summit at a distance, considerably diversify the scene; and, as the mine is in its infancy, the heaps of rubbish, with which it is too frequently accompanied, have not yet accumulated so as to offend the eye.

"In order to form a correct idea of this cascade, it will be necessary to take a view of it from the top. The rock appears, by some convulsion of nature, to be split into two fissures, through only one of which the water flowed till lately, part of it being now carried through the other for the purpose of working the mine.

"From the centre mass, which is about twenty feet high, two or three large pieces of the rock, as may be seen from the incumbent part, have fallen into the fissure, and have entirely covered it; which no doubt gave origin to the idea, that 'the water runs some way underground,' and, when overhung with brushwood, which is generally the case, the deception would be still more complete. I am convinced that this channel could never have been entirely formed by 'the irresistible force of the waters,' as the surface on either side is flat and almost perpendicular. The rock is of a slaty nature, with its strata, unless where it was probably forced out of its direction by the convulsion before alluded to, dipping southward at an angle of about forty-five degrees. The chasm or fissure, through which the river begins to fall, at the depth of about five and twenty feet, is about ten across. Through it the machinery of the mine below, with the water that is conveyed to it falling over some rough rocks, and

forming a kind of secondary cascade, is a pleasing object; whilst through the other chasm are seen at a distance the church and castle of Lidford. Viewed from below, the water seems in the centre of the chasm to rush from beneath a rock, which no doubt occasioned it to be called Kitt's *Hole*. After three or four obstructions in its course, it leaps over a ledge of rock in a perpendicular fall, but not more than twelve or fourteen feet in height, whilst the water in the basin below is about eleven feet deep.

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